

WORONI

wimmin's issue

ABOUT TIME
TOO!!





editorial

Hi there, well it might have been a holiday for some, but it certainly has been busy for those women (& others) working on this Women's Woroni. This issue concentrates on women, and their struggles and achievements. We hope it will speak for itself.

Unlike the very successful "Women & Culture" issue last year, in which we looked at the presence of women in many fields, and questioned the invisibility and misrepresentation women have received despite their great contributions, this issue focuses on those areas where

women are greatly visible, such as the home, the factory and education system. We attempt to analyse the problems these women face, and how oppression limits their life chances in various ways. We also try to focus attention on the struggles of women internationally, to help illustrate our unity with women everywhere who are struggling against oppression and are fighting for their rights and freedom.

We also hope, that like last time, you will get as much out of reading this issue as we had in getting it together.

Woroni Volume 32, Number 11, 8 September 1980. Published by Louise Tarrant for the ANU Students' Association September
 Editorial Collective: Sandy Tiffin, Greg Falk, Nick Gillard
 This issue put together by Annette, Michelle, Sue, Sandy, Louise, Dee, Bronwyn, Greg, Roland, Anita, Blackrose, Adrian and Jackie.

letters

BUSH RABBITS

Dear Eds,

Recently I witnessed a particularly disturbing spectacle at a concert by Alex's aggressive rock band The Vacant Rabbits (dig, dig?) where the lead singer sliced off bits of his flesh and tossed them to an all too blood-thirsty (and hence, appreciative) audience to consume. This sort of thing dear comrades, I would suggest is not only socially corrupting, but also ideologically unsound. I would therefore implore the singer in future to slice himself up into mince meat if necessary, but at least, do it in the privacy of his own hole in the ground (or else we'll let the law of the concrete jungle see who's write, [dig!])

I.M. Serious

in the interests of OBJECTIVITY

Dear Editors,

I wish to draw to the attention of your readers the lamentable bias of Woroni, not so much in the content of the articles (which speak for themselves) as in the discrimination afforded to Liberals who trouble to contribute.

For instance, in the edition featuring photos and policy statements of candidates for the Union Board elections, was it coincidence that all five Liberal candidates appeared grouped together (for identification purposes? like bells to warn of approaching lepers?)? Was it chance that all were placed at the end of the page, so that our policy statements would be the last to be read, if at all (assuming your readers to be normal souls who read from left to right, top to bottom)?

Did it escape your notice that only Liberals kept more or less to the word limit of 50 words, whereas most of the others did not?

You may believe (perhaps rightly) that subtle biases like these are more effective than more blatant forms of censorship? I contend, however, that students do notice and do come to adverse conclusions about the objectivity and credibility of Woroni that, in the long run, hurts you more than us.

Gary Humphries
 President, ANU Liberal Society

Dear Mr Humphries,

Well, the old right-wing conspiracy theory rears its ugly head again! We hope that the reds under the bed don't disturb your sleep too much, unlike your political bedfellow, Mr Yabsley. (see outline).
 The Eds.

CORRECTIONS

Dear People,

Might I beg a few lines in your letters column to draw to the attention of readers two misprints in my Council election policy statement?

My reference to "squabbles in the S.A. office or the Liberal Party panel-van" has been butchered by the use of "of" instead of "or", while the printed claim that teaching staff are "outnumbered 1.8 by research staff" should give the ratio as "1.8 to 1". Jeff Dalton has been less severely hit, quoted as saying that government interference is "applauded by the Liberal students".

The Returning Officer receives no applause from me for his performance with the policy statements. Of course we already knew that student members of Council are considered to be of little significance, but surely an effort could be made to proof-read the election material prior to its dissemination?

Yours in the Struggle against Incompetence,

Ian Rout.

PUBLIC TRUST

Dear Friends,

The Prime Minister made an election promise in 1977 to pass Freedom of Information legislation. The next election is due in December or, as rumoured, in October. Mr Fraser has not yet honoured his promise.

It is now well established that governments do not voluntarily give us the information we need. Freedom of Information legislation forces them to do so. If they refuse, effective FOI law makes their refusal subject to independent appeal, even if the refusal came from a Minister.

Australians have been promised FOI legislation since 1972. Ralph Nader, on his recent tour of Australia, endorsed what many people have been saying for years - FOI legislation is the major reform needed in this country to restore public trust and confidence in the integrity of Government.

The time to ask Mr Fraser to honour his promise is now. We need your help for ten minutes. Here is our simple programme:

a) in a letter, telegram, or 'phone call, ask the Prime Minister: 'Are you going to honour your election promise to pass Freedom of Information legislation before the next election, or will it be a broken promise?' Send a copy of your letter to your local Federal Member.

b) Pass copies of my letter quickly to friends and community groups and get them to do the same.

c) If you can spare fifteen minutes instead of ten, incorporate the key question in a letter to a newspaper; if you hear Mr Fraser is to be on talkback radio, ask him the question.

Whatever he says in reply, just repeat the question.

Rupert, the national FOIL Campaign Committee, and others, will be visiting journalists, but the part for which we need your help is most important.

Without Freedom of Information legislation, voting at an election is like signing a blank cheque. Let's get the doors of our government open - this year. Parliament resumes on August 19th. The time to write is now.

With best wishes,

John T.D. Wood
 Chairperson
 RUPERT Public Interest
 Movement Inc.

Rupert provides the Secretariat for the national Freedom of Information Legislation (FOIL) Committee. Rupert is dedicated to giving citizens more say in the democratic process. For more information, please write to the above address and send a donation to cover our printing and postage costs.

(Secrecy is the incubator of corruption' - Ralph Nader.

Location: Childers Street Buildings,
 Kingsley Street, Acton, ACT 2601.

WARREN on ANARCHY again

Dear Editors,

H. Olsen should re-read the first paragraph of 'Listen Anarchist . . .'. It was not addressed to any such thing as 'anarchist theory'. It was replying to the anarchist articles in an earlier Woroni.

Anarchy is not opposed by marxism, rather anarchy falls apart by itself, to reveal the need for organised political action against political economy. Anarchy is progressively replaced by marxism.

Such phrases as 'the narrow-minded approach of economic determinist pseudo-science and its philosophical bastard', and 'the pathetic old marxist cliches', reflect the internal anger Olsen feels because marxism, as a standpoint, effectively transcends the unscientific, emotional, and unsocial methodology of anarchism. Marxism addresses itself to social problems in a scientific way and therefore can give anarchism its 'pink slip'. It doesn't help anarchists to launch out with strong, knowledgeable sounding, but

vitriolic attacks on marxism.

Olsen is just simply dreaming if he/she thinks that, 'universal social tolerance', based on the simple (!!!) biological fact of the practically infinite human diversity, (can cope with) human individuality and creativity.'

There will only be universal social tolerance if there is no economic exploitation by class, race, or sex.

Thus political economy clearly is the proper starting point for radical theory.

I truly hope that Olsen one day finds a difference between a bourgeois state and a proletarian state and between the size and morality of their ruling classes.

Bon Voyage,

Chris Warren
 Corin Dam House.

Chris, for your information:

1. the strategies of Marxist movements have been strategies for conquest and use of power, strategies of affirmation of politics in every country ruled by Marxists, the basic politics, i.e. the basic structures of state, have been perpetuated, or if in collapse reinstated and revived, a fact that lends support to the claim that anarchism is the only social philosophy that asserts an alternative to the politics of power.

2. vitriolic attacks on Marxism "cause squabbles with socialists and communists" (Woroni Vol. 32 No. 9, p.20). Anarchists see in Marxism an illusion of liberation and the creation of new structures of power that forever defer it and that nullify spontaneous liberations briefly tolerated.

3. anarchists propose:
 - that the individual is the fundamental social (but not necessarily metaphysical) reality;
 - that voluntary agreement is the foundation of cooperation;
 - that everyone is responsible for their actions;
 - that the assumption of power of submission to power in any sphere is negation of the fundamental human reality;
 - that a morality of principles that apply the theme of power-negation affirms the free development of individuality as the condition of realizing our sense of humanity;
 - that faith and trust towards persons is the vital ethical centre of anarchism;
 - that power is the root evil of human being;
 - that integral freedom is immanent in human life and history as an always realizable potentiality;
 - that freedom is the reversal of the substitution of institutional definition,

for oneself;
 - that individuals are the loci of social change as well as the foundation of free society;
 - that in the continuous realization of freedom values are won continuously.

4. Please stop being so damn authoritarian. You are dealing with people.

5. Thank you David Wieck.

Greg Falk.

Outline

YABSLEY RHETORIC

Michael Yabsley, the endorsed Liberal candidate for the Fraser electorate in the A.C.T., may be regretting his initial enthusiasm for entering the rough and tumble life of Federal politics. His desire to 'meet the people' has backfired disastrously, culminating recently in an alarming incident whereby he found himself standing behind a kerosine card table which he feared the unemployed, for want of occupation, might set alight with flaming torches. In lamenting the growing recognition of his lack of popularity with his electorate, Yabsley told the Canberra Times "the thing that causes me personal distress is that I won't feel safe going to sleep tonight in view of the thing which has happened".

It is not surprising to regular readers of Woroni that Yabsley is being given such a hard time. Last year, Woroni, (Vol 31 July 23 - Aug 6) published an article headed 'Former Exchange Student Sings Republic's Praises'. At that time, the capitalist press was sensationalising the Muldergate scandal in which \$A64 million was reputedly spent on promoting South Africa's overseas interests, including the buying of newspapers and the funding of politicians in a number of countries including Australia. Yabsley's interests in South Africa gave significant cause for alarm:

"Since I returned from South Africa I have maintained very close association with the South African Embassy, and have in fact made many close friends there. You will no doubt be amused to find among the press clippings I have sent you, an accusation made in the International Socialist newspaper that I have been acting as some kind of spy or agent for BOSS. The left wing really does live in a world of amazing fantasy.

South Africa, though moreso Rhodesia, continues to occupy large portions of our daily newspapers as well as radio and T.V. news. My opinion is that Carter is eventually realizing the realities of Southern Africa, and that to give the Black Nationalists breathing space will only be to the detriment of world peace.

As far as my plans to return to South Africa are concerned, I am not sure when they are likely to materialise. I constantly recall the valued experiences of 1975 and sincerely hope it will not be too long before I can enjoy some of those experiences with you again."

Meanwhile Yabsley, under police protection when necessary, continues to electioneer in the hope of attracting a passing swinging voter. The fact is though that nobody seems interested in what he and present Fraser government have to offer. A \$2 increase in unemployment benefits leaves it \$20 below the Henderson poverty line, while \$4 increase in Tertiary benefits leaves it in real terms \$5 less than the 1974 level (not to mention the \$24 below the Henderson poverty line).

With a balanced budget the Government can offer more tax concessions to multi-national companies while the unemployed and students get next to nothing.

Politics to Yabsley and his like are enriched with empty rhetoricempty because a vast mass of Australians suffer from its policies.

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation campaign is still going and is still unresolved.

The rent strike is going great guns with almost \$20,000 being withheld from Admin's coffers!

We're in quite a strong bargaining position considering this outstanding sum and also the university administrations fear of students taking direct action in the form of rallies, sit-ins etc.

The present situation? Last Uni Council decided to ask the Vice-Chancellor to investigate the accommodation situation (he has had the last 6 months and the advice of 3 committees to have done this long ago!) and possible rationalisations. Rationalisation is not a pretty word! We must make sure they don't begin to question the investment viability of owning houses or start making changes to the present structure without the support of students.

Other than this token gesture of concern for accommodation council rejected the concept that low income earning students should pay no more than 20% of their income in rent and they rejected the demand that the university absorb the costs of heating conversion in the halls - instead students have to pay.

Are we looking at a \$58 week tariff for Bruce Hall in 1981?? Looks like it!

On demands such as no important accommodation decisions being made outside the academic year (so as to ensure adequate student input and response) and no low-cost accommodation being removed without replacement of similar lodging there was given by council the most cynical, hypocritical "sympathetic support". In effect they'll O.K. the concept whilst it doesn't interfere but they made it quite clear that it will merely be a guide to future action not a recognised restraint.

It is quite obvious that admin. has wiggled out of giving any concrete commitment to change the presently untenable accommodation situation at this university. We mustn't allow these people to continue ripping-us-off. We must make sure they never forget we want, and intend to get a better, more just, accommodation package.

COME TO THE ACCOMMODATION MEETING TO DETERMINE 3RD TERM TACTICS HAYDEN-ALLEN TANK TUESDAY, 1P.M. SEPT. 9.

UNION

The union is a major figure in the role of most of our lives. There, each day, we (try to) eat at the Refectory, drink at the Bar or perhaps just pass through as somewhere to escape the Canberra cold. Recently 466 interested people voted to elect 10 representatives to the Union Board of management. The "Left" fielded a ticket of 10 of which 8 were duly elected.

Basically the Board is the administrative arm of the Union, seeing to many small details that keeps the Union functioning. Small details such as finance and bar renovations - things that most people may find excruciatingly dull, yet someone has to do it or there would be no Union to go to! However much one may complain we do try to maintain adequate efficiency (laughter!) in all areas. The 10 elected representatives are there in the interest of students - and as many students pre-occupation with the Union lies in their drinking habits you will note the soon to come about changes (when the 'new' bar opens) in the variety of beers available. Yes a small change, but that's our purpose.

A relatively large number of students are employees of the ANU Union, and we must ensure that these and all the other employees are kept happy in their employment, so that the Union runs smoothly and efficiently. Staff changes have been an issue for us lately - it's obvious that we will have to attempt to keep a balance in these matters.

Activities are often a focus point of the Union, Dave Turner (Activities Officer) has at the last meeting been made a part-time employee - this will mean mostly a change in salary for him. Let me assure you there will be no decreases in the amount of activities presented by the Union, this is a measure that has been necessary for some time. The types of activities we try to present are as varied as possible, although it's obvious we cannot cater for everyone at the same time, it would be helpful if people could share their views by contacting Dave Turner in the Union Office.

The Knotholes Bar - it does seem to be a perennial problem - how many people have known of its very existence prior to its usage in the term break whilst the main bar was being renovated (see other comments this page). A coffee machine was installed to encourage people to use this area as a quiet meeting place during the day.....you have now been informed of this so take your chance and use it although other changes may be in the offing.

So! You now have a brief rundown of the new board - its meetings are held monthly - see the notice board in the Union foyer for details - do attend if you are at all interested in what's happening in your environment. Perhaps we'll see you there!??

NEW BAR

A total of \$41,181 has been spent on renewing the Union Bar. For our money, Union members are assured that / the new bar is up to Health Department Regulations / it will operate more efficiently: service will be faster! / the bar will provide a wider variety of beer' (Tooths LA, Tooths New, Tooheys Old, Carlton and Guinness). / with new pipes 'the beer is going to taste a whole lot nicer'.

As well, there is a larger beer storage area that will add to efficiency and eliminate breakages.

Yet, for all these seemingly benevolent actions carried out by the Union Board, they have chosen to continue operating at cost levels that equal and at times exceed market rates. It is paradoxical that pubs in Canberra sell their wares cheaper than the Union, when we pay a membership fee that entitles us to use an excessively expensive service. Pricing problems plague our Union: witness the cost of stationary from the ground floor shop (next to the Refectory). These problems are not new; they should be eliminated.

The new bar opens on Monday September 15 with a week long celebration. All prices for beer will be reduced by 10% and special activities have been organised. Some of these will include barbeque facilities on the patio of the Union Bar, and Old English pub night and Irish night. As well live entertainment will be provided every day between 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.; and between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. On the Saturday, jazz will be performed between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Once again the Union is offering a genuine special for its members. Don't miss out: it could be your last chance.

A.N.U. ARTS CENTRE

REGULAR ACTIVITIES/CLASSES

CANBERRA DANCE ENSEMBLE

Regular Dance classes: Classical, modern & jazz

CONTACT: Stephanie Burrige on 815528 or Graham Farquhar on 494407

YOGA

Regular classes conducted by Swami Krishnananda 549644

POTTERY

Regular classes conducted by Ron Hemmings 488216

T'AI CHI

Twice weekly classes by Barry Rosenberg. Enquiries to the Arts Centre 494787

ART WORKSHOPS

Held weekly for those interested in life drawing & painting - enquiries to the Arts Centre

PUBLIC EVENTS

12 - 14 September - THEATRE

PACT Youth theatre group from Sydney present their production of Shakespeare's A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM

Fri, 12th at 7.30 pm - Sat 13th at 2pm

& 7.30pm - Sun 14th at 2pm:

Tickets at the door.

26 - 28 & 30 September - THEATRE

THEATRUM CLASSICUM, Classics dept.

present CASINA by Plautus. A roman comedy in Latin.

Evening performances.

Tickets at the door

THE REVUE

In spite of the government's efforts to steal the thunder on our revue by spreading tales of an early election, we are proceeding as planned, but we're going on a little earlier. The dates are now:

SAT 18 OCTOBER at 8 & 10pm.

SUN 19 at 8pm

THUR 23 at 10pm

FRI 24 at 8 & 10pm.

TYPING: Rapid reliable work at reasonable prices. Ph. 262379

STUDENTS may advertise in Woroni Free! Send your classified ads to "Woroni" c/- S.A. Office, Union Building.

COMPUTER BASED INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SERVICES IN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

From 1 September the Library will offer access to retrospective computer based bibliographic information retrieval services presently provided in science.

This service will cover a wide range of humanities and social science data bases offered by the Lockheed DIALOG Information Retrieval system in California, U.S.A., and will be available through terminals located in the J.B. Chifley and

RESULTS OF C.C.C.C. RAFFLES

Drawn August 25th (FOOD HAMPER)

1st Prize Pink E15 Blackrose

2nd Prize Green C3 D. Lewis

3rd Prize Orange D65 J.Luck

DRAWN August 27th (LIFE ON EARTH)

Winner Yellow B61 Wilma Hewitt

The last date for withdrawing from full year units without penalty is Friday, 12 September, and for semester units, it is 30 September.

SPORTS

ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF THE FACULTIES

When nominations closed at 5 pm on Monday, 28 July 1980 I had received the following nominations for membership of the Board of the Faculties:

Academic Staff Members.

Faculty of Arts

Dr H.N. Collins

Professor D.J. Mulvaney

Dr B. Rawson

Professor C.M. Williams 4 members

Faculty of Asian Studies

Dr R. Mason 1 member

Faculty of Economics

Professor C.R. Heathcote

Dr R.V. Jackson 2 members

Faculty of Law

Members nominated by

Professors

Professor D.W. Greig

Professor D.J. Whalan

Professor L. Zines 3 members

Members nominated by

remaining academic staff:

Dr D.E. Fisher

D. D. O'Connor

Mr D.L. Pape 3 members

Faculty of Science

Dr F.L. Bygrave

Dr J.A. Carnahan

Dr K.A.W. Crook

Dr R.A. Jarvis 4 members

Student members:

Faculty of Arts

Mr J. Dalton 1 member

Faculty of Asian Studies

Nil 1 member

Faculty of Economics

Mr J.J. Fink 1 member

Faculty of Law

Ms C. Webster 1 member

Faculty of Science

Mr T. Barton 1 member

Undergraduate Student:

Mr E. Getzler 1 member

Postgraduate Student:

Mr K. Sawyer 1 member

As the number of nominations matched the number of vacancies in all the categories with the exception of student membership from the Faculty of Asian Studies, I declare all those whose names are listed above to be elected.

I shall call again for nominations in a separate notice for a student member from the Faculty of Asian Studies.

G.E. Dicker
Registrar & Returning
Officer.

30 July 1980.

ANU UNION BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

DECLARATION OF ELECTION

I hereby declare the following candidates, who received the ten (10) largest number of votes, elected to membership of the Union Board of Management:

Ian NOLAN
Anita KEOGH
Peter CARDWELL
Malcolm JACKSON
Bob QUIGGIN
Bronwen TURNER
Alison DUNCAN-JONES
Chris WARREN
Steve WRIGHT
Jeff FUROLO

L.A.J. Sutherland,
Returning Officer
14.8.80

R.G. Menzies Buildings. Searches are performed online, but the citations, unless they are very few, are printed offline and mailed to Canberra, normally arriving within 7 to 10 days.

Initially, access to the following data bases will be provided:

J.B. Chifley Building:

COMPREHENSIVE DISSERTATION
ABSTRACTS

ECONOMIC ABSTRACTS INTER-
NATIONAL

ERIC

HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS

LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE

BEHAVIOUR ABSTRACTS

MLA BIBLIOGRAPHY

PAIS INTERNATIONAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS

SOCIAL SCISEARCH

SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS

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COMPREHENSIVE DISSERTATION
ABSTRACTS

ECONOMIC ABSTRACTS INTER-
NATIONAL

ERIC

HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS

GPO MONTHLY CATALOG

PAIS INTERNATIONAL

POPULATIONS BIBLIOGRAPHY

PTS FEDERAL INDEX

SOCIAL SCISEARCH

SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS

The use of these data bases, together with the availability of other data bases of interest in humanities and social sciences, will be kept under review.

The charge for use of this service is \$25 per 10 minutes of on line time or part thereof, including up to 25 citations printed offline.

Additional citations will be charged for at the rate of 13c per citation.

A variety of data bases may be used for a given search, e.g., LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE BEHAVIOUR plus MLA, BIBLIOGRAPHY or ECONOMIC ABSTRACTS INTERNATIONAL plus PAIS INTERNATIONAL plus COMPREHENSIVE DISSERTATIONS ABSTRACTS.

For further details of this service contact:

Ms Jill Lulham, R.G. Menzies

Building Ext 2005

Mrs Judith Shelley, J.B. Chifley

Building Ext 4431/4428

or, for general informations:

Mr Michael Evans, Deputy Science

Librarian, Ext 3693;

Similar services in Science, using the

Lockheed DIALOG Informations Retrieval

Service, were described in LIBRARY

INFO sheet 8/1980.

A NEW CINEMA CONCEPT FOR CANBERRA

On Monday September 8th, a new concept in cinema programming will be launched in Canberra at Boulevard Blue. Under the name of Electric Shadows, a wide variety of films will be shown in a constantly changing programme. There will be screening seven days a week, with late shows on Friday and Saturday nights, and matinees on Sunday as well as Saturday. The programme is a blend of established favourites, showing for one day each, and films that are new to Canberra, screening for limited seasons, usually of one week. The aim is to appeal to a variety of tastes at a variety of times.

Admission: Adults \$3.50.

Students, pensioners, Jobless Action members, children...\$2.00 - These prices apply at all sessions on all days.

The Feature occupies the entire programme.

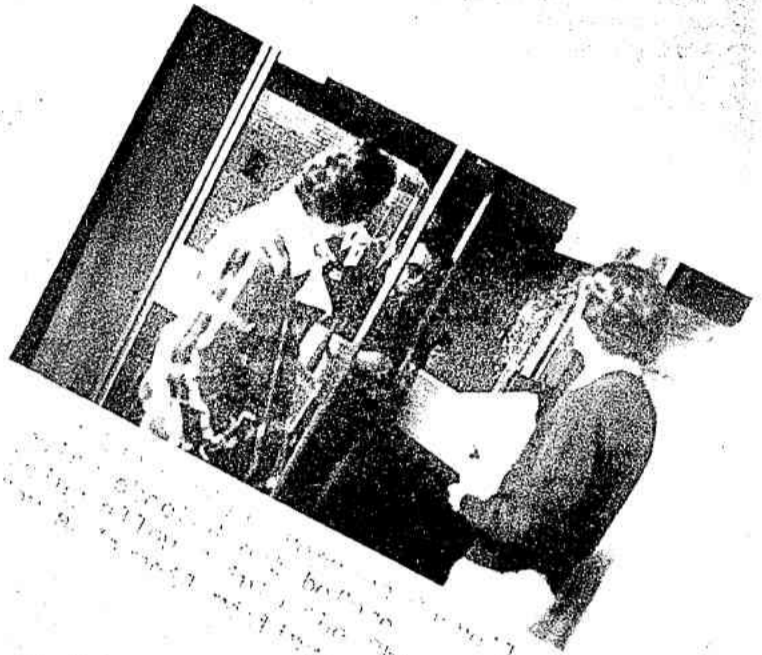
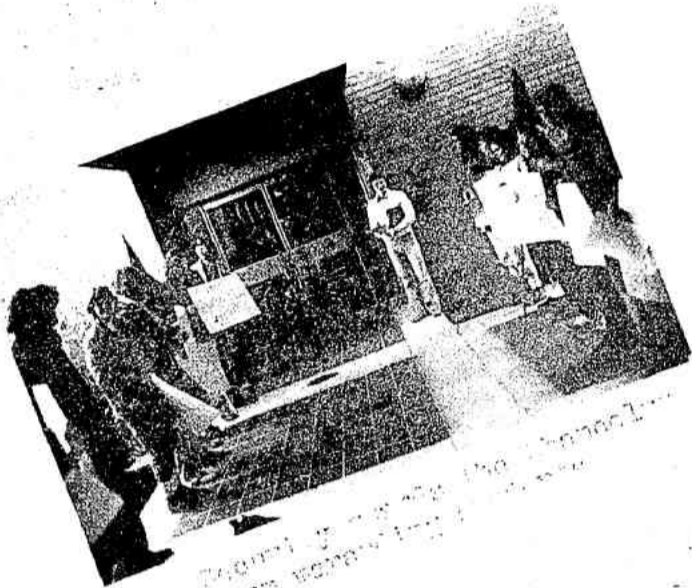
Other Australian cities have had cinemas like Electric Shadows for years. One is long overdue in Canberra!

See advertisements for further details of the programme.

stop press . . .

IS ADMIN. RUNNING A

CLOSED SHOP?



Science outside the Chancelry of the ANU in Canberra, 1979.

Well 3rd term is here and there still exists between students and university administration a number of unresolved conflicts.

The important issue is still accommodation. It will always be important for impoverished students but it is only important to admin. when students are militant and demand a better deal.

The accommodation campaign started with a bang earlier this year — the effects of which are still reverberating around the corridors of the Chancelry. Once more administration was made aware that students are a powerful force that cannot be ignored.

The response of Chancelry occupants has been interesting to say the least:

- * whenever a student meeting is now held on campus the Chancelry doors are guarded by security people.

- * Chancelry windows have recently been modified so that none open more than 3 inches.

- * all air vents on the bottom of office doors have been covered over.

- * and all entrances and exits have 4 new deadlocks on each door.

One might wonder at the motives behind such modifications to the Chancelry edifice. However, I think it is fairly self-evident — admin. is scared of the power that students can and this year, have, wielded. Student power is a reality and direct action is the only weapon we have against that bureaucratic monolith that is centred on the Chancelry building.

This year we have argued student poverty till we're blue in the face. Students are not a wealthy class of citizen. Less than 30% of tertiary students receive *any* (not full) TEAS and the rest?? Also of importance are figures from a recent Dept. of Education survey of ANU students. 51.8% of ANU students surveyed are in University accommodation compared with the national figure of 14.4%.

Despite this type of evidence, Council last month rejected the guts of the accommodation demands, so where does that leave us?

We used confrontationist tactics earlier this year and were listened to. We then got conned into going onto committees, etc — a major tactical blunder in my opinion. Now the only course of action that might make admin. realize that their current accommodation policies are inadequate even repressive is a return to confrontation. Administrations are not benevolent, they will not listen or give concessions unless made to, and our only bargaining strength is through group direct action.



Interestingly, last week, the Minister for Education, Wal Fife announced "the way is now clear for the University to make fully effective arrangements for the disbursement of the proceeds of the compulsory fees collected from student during 1980. The University will also be able to make arrangements for 1981

The Government will review the position early in 1981". It looks like we may have won — for the time being at least — on the question of voluntary membership fees for the Students' Association. However, our position will never be safe whilst the present anti-union government is in power.



ANU STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
NOMINATIONS ARE CALLED FOR THE
FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

- PRESIDENT
- TREASURER
- TRUSTEE
- A.U.S. SECRETARY
- WORONI EDITOR

Nominations are now open and will close at 12 noon on Wednesday, 24 September, 1980.

Nominations must be signed by 2 persons eligible to vote in the election (members of the Students' Association) and must contain a signed statement of the nominees willingness to act in the position if elected.

Times and places of voting will be advised at a later date. Voting will be by ballot box and will be held in the week October 6 - 10, 1980.

Louise Tarrant
Acting Returning Officer

WANT TO BE FAMOUS?
HOW ABOUT BEING
A RETURNING OFFICER?
Nominations close Mon 17th.
Election 6th meeting
2pm Wed. 17th.

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Telephone: 47 4897
(we're upstairs between the
Alternate Bookshop and the TAB)

why a women's room?

— To provide a front for an overthrow of the Union?

Hardly necessary. Such fronts already exist within the Union, there would be little point in adding to them. Unfortunately for those fantasiers among you the actual reason is much more simple and obvious.

The need for a women's room has arisen out of the incredible number of different directions women have taken this year, and the lack of some base where all women and their interests, can come together. We have women in student politics and welfare, writing articles for the student newspapers and other publications, making films and doing radio programmes, organising child-care facilities, workshops, discussion groups, and social events . . . the list remains ever increasing. But unfortunately, other than at the Women on Campus Meetings there is little opportunity for women to get together in one place and let each other know what things are happening.

This is important, as apart from receiving the mutual benefit of shar-

ing ideas and information, all these women need support in whatever they are up to. They can only become accessible if there is a central base where others can find out what's going on and then know how to get involved if they want to.

POINTS TO WHY WE NEED A WOMEN'S ROOM

- * act as a focal point for the women's collective
- * a place to meet women on campus
- * a place to read
- * for discussion
- * place to hold meetings
- * a place to store resources
- * a place for women only.



WOMEN ON CAMPUS

Women on Campus is alive and well has lots of plans for third term. We have decided to concentrate our energies into a few specific areas, instead of spreading ourselves too thin and overcommitting ourselves.

This Woroni is our first major project for third term, — the result of many hours of hard work.

This is the prelude to our major campaign for this year, which will be an offensive on sexual harassment. This will be held in a few weeks time, and we hope to have displays, stalls, speakers and films exposing rape, assault and other less obvious but more insidious forms of sexual harassment, especially on this campus.

Our other major project is to expand and increase the use of the Women's Room. We are conducting an extensive advertising campaign — you've probably already noticed the leaflets and posters!

The Women's Room is open to all women on campus, as a place to relax and have a cup of coffee, read the magazines and other resources available (which are especially useful for writ-

ing essays) meet other women socially, or to plan action and activities, or just retreat in peace and quiet for a while.

A Roster is operating, so that the room is open between 10 and 4 each day, but more women are needed for this roster.

So watch out for the posters giving more information of activities planned and get involved!

THE WOMEN'S ROOM

open between 10 am and 4 pm

Monday to Friday.

W.O.C. meetings Monday 1 p.m.

Consciousness-raising Groups, Mon. 6 pm

ALL WOMEN WELCOME

Sharing relaxation resources.

AUS WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT

The Women's Department is an integral part of our national student union, the Australian Union of Students, and one in which every woman student can be involved.

Established in 1975, the Women's Department arose out of a real need felt, and articulated, by women students across the country. Delegates to AUS Council in 1975 agreed that the national union had a responsibility to confront the situation within tertiary institutions and within the Union itself whereby women students suffer particular *because* we are women. And so we saw the establishment of the Women's Dept.

Since 1975, the Women's Dept. has been one of the strongest, if not *the* strongest, areas of the Union. Its strength lies in its activist orientation. Women's Dept activism is based on several principles, principles that are constructive and forward-thinking and have real relevance to women students.

are a reflection of our larger society, problems cannot be tackled in isolation. The Women's Dept is therefore seen as a part of the wider Women's Liberation Movement. A third principle is the recognition that involvement in decision-making is often a question of

The first of these principles is that since women students suffer particular problems *because* we are women, it is only through organising together as women that these problems can be analysed and acted upon. A second principle recognises that because questions of power within tertiary institutions and student unions access to information. Hence the Women's Dept. operates at a grass-roots level, with decision-making involving as many people as possible.

Access to information and ability to be involved in decision-making depend largely on structure adopted, i.e. whether the structure facilitates, or acts against mass involvement. The structure adopted by the Women's Dept operates at three levels and is geared to wide involvement. Women at campus level are able to use the resources of the Women's Dept to organise together and establish campus women's groups. On many campuses this has already been done. Women from campuses also come together through the Regional Women's Policy Collective. At this level, recommendations are made concerning aims, campaigns and political direction and these are then considered at the national level through the National Women's Policy Collective.

The structure, to work well, depends on communication between women students at campus, regional and national level. It depends, too, on effective co-ordination and leadership of campaigns. And this is where the National Women's Officer and the Regional Women's Organisers are involved.

The National W.O. acts as a co-ordinator and organiser of national campaigns. Because of the nature of her job, campus visiting is an important part of it. She may be contacted at the AUS Women's Dept., 97 Drummond Street, Carlton 3053, Vic.



CULTURE, CLASS AND FEMINIST EDUCATION

Australian Women's Education Coalition 1980 CONFERENCE

VENUE: VICTORIAN TEACHERS UNION 335 Camberwell Rd Camberwell Victoria

REGISTRATION \$10 & \$3

THEMES: Women in Education and the Economic Crisis, Sex and Class, Feminism and Multi-cultural Education, Education for Aboriginal Women and Girls, Further Education for Women, Older Women's Education (more ideas welcome)

CONTACT: Chris Lee (03) 689 5861

Barbara Preston (03) 387 3538

Gail Shelston (03) 387 6091

Jane Anstee (02) 347 7433

Sylvia Kinder (07) 569 1415

Queenie Frigarty (08) 223 1404

Judy Hebblethwaite (09) 341 1216

Conference Collective (002) 30 6409

26 Clarence Street East Brunswick 3057

why a women's group?

Women's Collectives — Why

To recognize the structure of society as one which is based on the power relationships of men, as a distinct social group, over women, is the first link which joins women together to act on a collective basis. We as women are not discriminated against as individuals but as a group. As such it is appropriate for us to fight back as a group not as isolated individuals.

Women working together collectively as opposed to individually is the most important merit of women's collectives. Demands placed by women on a collective basis take on a new broader perspective from those placed in individual women. They are no longer seen as affecting one woman but as affecting all women.

An example:

When women on campus fight issues, such as sexual harassment of women students, as a collective we begin to eat away at the myths surrounding sexual harassment. Working as a collective we destroy the myth that sexual harass-

ment affects only a few women and that it only concerns the woman involved in the incident, when in fact we all are involved in one way or another. When a woman is sexually harassed she has very little power to combat the male advances. If she as an individual should wish to do anything constructive about the situation she would be faced with many possible repercussions. The male academic can give her low grades and make life generally hard for her, the men in the department will most probably not believe her. Many other problems would have to be overcome by her, alone. Whereas, if the woman comes to the women's collective, she is stating that her case is not an isolated incident which only affects her, but one which affects all women. Like many other forms of discrimination, women are led to believe that they are their own isolated problem.

We must smash the myth of the individual isolated incident in all cases of discrimination, because the first step to overthrowing the balance of power that men hold over women is to unite.

AUTONOMY

Autonomy (women only) of a women's collective is essential in achieving the aims of a women's collective — fighting women's oppression.

Women who feel isolated on a male dominated campus, in a male dominated course, or women who feel the need to discuss issues with other women do not want to be confronted with men in a women's group. How is a woman who wants to discuss how she feels about rape, marriage, motherhood, etc., feel with men in the discussion group. A woman who feels powerless about her situation and wishes to discuss that powerlessness does not need to discuss that power relationship with a person who is part of that power base.

The intention of a women's group is not to act as a debating forum for men, or act as a consciousness raising group for men, but for women only. If men feel the burning desire to end discrimination against women, then they can form their own consciousness raising groups. There are plenty of other opportunities for men to join in discussion with women or men and to

support women's liberation without participating in a WOMEN's collective.

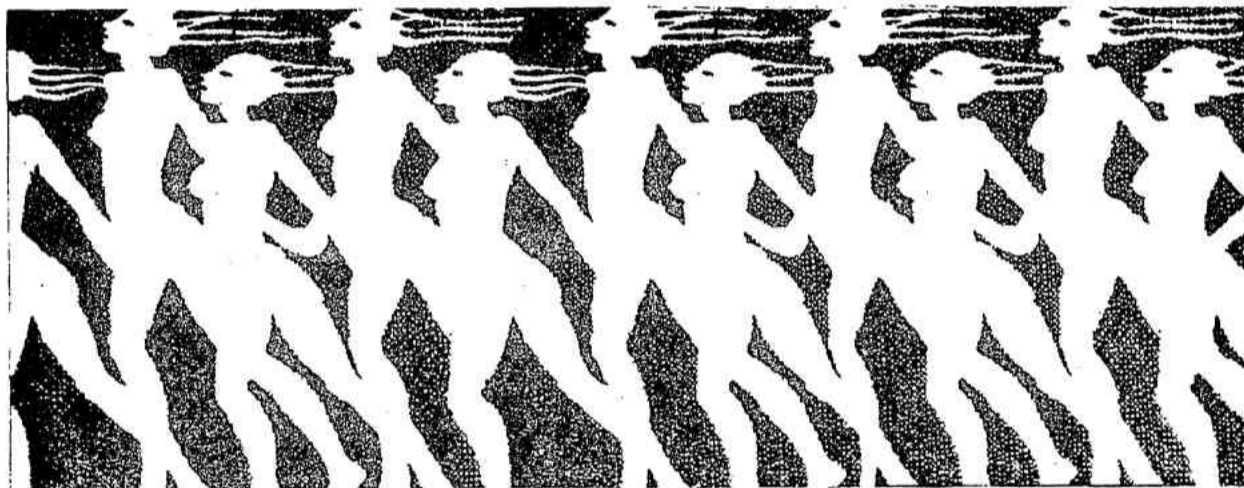
Having men in a women's collective reminds me of inviting the employers to join a trade union with their employees.

SUPPORT, LEARNING AND EXCHANGE

Women's collectives are not only necessary in fighting for an end to discrimination against women, but also to act in support of women on campus. Women isolated by their sex and political outlook on campus need to support each other in their struggle to survive. The only way we can overcome our oppression is to support each other and by doing so tying the bonds between women that have for so long been trivialised by male society. Discussion and consciousness raising are vital areas which the women's collective must not neglect. Women's collectives can help bring women together, who for so long have been put one against another by the very nature of patriarchal society. The need for women to join together, to build alliances together, to discuss our oppression together and learn together must be fulfilled by the collective

POINTS AS TO WHY WE NEED WOMEN'S COLLECTIVES

- * statement of the existence of the oppression of women and the need to fight against it.
- * to join together, individual women in a collective struggle.
- * support for women by women.
- * learning exchange and consciousness raising.
- * social.



are they sexist?

The word "sexism" arose as an analogy to "racism". Both words came out of particular situations and political struggles.

Simply: both "sexism" and "racism" are used to describe those attitudes, actions, institutions etc. which help to maintain an overall situation of political oppression of a particular sex or race — an over-all sexist or racist society (or subsociety). An isolated instance, considered out of context, cannot be judged to be in itself sexist or racist, though it can be judged to be unjust discrimination on the grounds of sex or race.

The existence of women's groups and women's rooms are not a form of 'female sexism' as has often been bandied around. 'Female-sexism' is not possible because of the nature of sexism. Sexism is a power relationship, and in Australian patriarchal society, it is the power relationship of men over women that exists. It is impossible for 'female sexism' to exist as women have no power as a group over men.

An example of indirect discrimination was the attempt by W.A. Premier Charles Court to deny Aborigines the vote through literacy-in-English requirements. And there were the notorious

poll taxes, literacy tests etc. in the Southern states of the USA which for about a century excluded blacks from voting after they had formally won that right.

Some types of indirect sexist discrimination are specifically outlawed in British anti-discrimination legislation.

Examples of such sexism are regulations requiring continuous, full-time study over many years (many medical specialties) or setting maximum age limits on training entry (many apprenticeships). These discriminate against women because so many women (and few men) wish to spend some time raising children in their early adult years. Some women are not adversely affected and some men are, but the adverse effects are upon women as a group. Vocations/professions which wish to keep down the numbers of women without explicitly excluding them can enforce such regulations. Similarly, Court's voting proposal, though aimed at Aborigines would affect illiterate-in-English whites and would not directly affect literate Aborigines, but the general discrimination would be against the voting power of Aborigines as a group. Such cases of indirect discrimination are obviously sexist and racist when considered in

context. The factual situation of major power differentials between whites and blacks as a group, between men and women as a group, and the actual possibilities for ending that differential are part of that context.

It is a political reality that the oppression of a group can often be fought (or at least ameliorated) *only* by the members of that group coming together in some way. Situations are complex, and they differ. Sometimes it will be appropriate for people not of the oppressed group to be excluded, sometimes not. In the women's movement a lot of anti-sexist men are actively involved, in all-male groups like Males Against Sexism, in mixed groups such as anti-sexism committees in unions, or as individuals in their work places, friendship groups etc. Likewise, many whites are working hard to combat racism in a variety of ways. However, men cannot "give" women, or whites "give" blacks their liberation from oppression. Women, like blacks need to build strength and solidarity among themselves and to struggle for their liberation.

The importance of conditioning in maintaining the sexism of society provides women with a reason for excluding men. Conditioning has worked to generally make women passive and de-

pendent in relation to men who are conditioned to be dominant and initiative taking. It is very difficult for women (similarly men) to break out of that conditioning when they are constantly interacting with men who have not themselves overcome their conditioning. In addition, the usual living situations of women (and certain cultural elements) tend to isolate women from each other. Without some sharing of personal-political experiences with other women, without some mutual consciousness raising, women cannot take the first step of their situation of frustration/powerlessness/poverty/humiliation/fear as an isolated, individual aberration from the norm. A warm, supportive place which is for the exclusive use of women is clearly useful. The Women's Rooms provide such a place. (see below).

Of course the word "sexism" (similarly "racism") does get used to describe isolated cases of discrimination on the grounds of sex, irrespective of the overall political, cultural, etc. context ("maternity hospitals are sexist", "black-one corroborrees are racist"). However, this usage does nothing to help us understand society, or to change it. It confuses the issues and defuses political action on issues like sexism and racism.



SEXUAL

rape action; two viewpoints

RAPE: AND ANU

There's not one woman on an Australian campus who has not suffered some form of sexual harassment. The ANU is no exception. The Rape Crisis Centre in Canberra has received a number of calls from female students about attacks on ANU campus, inadequate lighting around the campus and fears of attack when walking alone at night around ANU. Wimmin must take action to expose and prevent these attacks and the potential for further attacks.

Lighting: in many areas on campus the lighting is poor to non-existent, particularly around the carparks. After contacting the Building and Grounds department RCC (Rape Crisis Centre) was told that they are prepared to light only proper walkways around campus, not shortcuts (a woman was attacked on her way from the Union Building to Corin Huts, near the carpark; there is no lighting there and she was unable to identify her attacker — Are these common walkways not considered 'proper' and therefore not warranting lighting?)

Rape in the Halls: Many rapes/sexual assaults occur in the halls of residence, and most of these incidents are not reported. There are many reasons why wimmin don't report rape, some are:

- Threatened with further assault: Fear of being attacked or harassed again if they make moves to tell people about their experience or blatant threats that they will get hurt if they expose the attacker.
- Fear that they will not be believed: many wimmin fear that if they attempt to report the incident people will not take them seriously or will think of it being their fault and call them "slut" or a "bitch". And most wimmin with good reason, fear telling the police because of the intimidation they would feel when in direct contact with our "wonderfully" patriarchal institution, the Police force.
- Blackmail or Academic Rape*
- Many wimmin don't know of anyone to talk with who won't make them feel intimidated.

Our freedom to move as we wish, when we wish, where we wish on campus (or anywhere) should not be restricted by fear of attack. We should not have to observe a curfew.

What can you do?

1. R.C.C. — Rape Crisis Centre — the Rape Crisis Centre provides support, legal and medical advice, information on sexual assault and affirmative action. If you are raped/sexually assaulted or fear this may happen to you, you can contact us on 47 8070

2. W.A.R. — Wimmin Against Rape — a group of wimmin who will take affirmative action.

3) WOC — Wimmin on Campus: meets every Monday 1 pm. Wimmins Room ANU Union Building. In third term we are organising a campaign against sexual harassment on campus — contact Sue and Annette on 48 6197 or ring the S.A. on 49 2444.

4. Talk with other wimmin in your college or circle of friends about your feelings. e.g. walking or riding a push bike at night by yourself; various routes that you are afraid to take; fears/suspicions about a man/men on campus; other women may feel the same way — Discussion and action groups really need to be formed in the halls and colleges.

5. Academic Rape for action and further information see article on this very subject.

If you know of incidents of sexual harassment/assault on campus to yourself or other wimmin or you do not take certain routes because they are too dark, contact R.C.C. on 47 8070 or 47 7725 or address letters to R.C.C., 3 Lobelia Street, O'Connor, 2601. or W.O.C. — S.A. Union Building, ANU 49 2444

All matters discussed will be treated confidentially and sympathetically. See further notices for a meeting early next term on Sexual Harassment. — Fight back! Women's Self-Defence courses are held in the Dojo Room, at the rear of Kingsley Street, Hall, every Monday and Wednesday between 7 - 8.30pm.

*See article on this subject.

RAPE ON THIS CAMPUS

Are you concerned about your safety and that of other women? All women on this campus are threatened by the possibility of rape. We should, and often do, think of ourselves as continually under siege: a reprehensible state of mind alien to male experience of living or working in a university. Women's freedom of behaviour is compromised by the fear of rape: we must avoid walking alone at night (a pleasant and peaceful exercise if one is male!); we must plan ahead for evenings out to ensure a safe return home, and perhaps leave earlier or later than we would wish; censor our conversation and even lie, to avoid informing strangers that we are home alone, or live alone. Most women regularly experience moments of fear; that paralyzing chill when a car slows alongside you, the sense of panic when footsteps seem to dog your own, nervous agitation when a man seems to be staring at you in a deserted street or park. The most sickening aspect of this is that such paranoia is *justified*. A woman's experience of walking across the ANU campus at night is the equivalent of a man's experience of walking in New York's Central Park at night — the threat of physical harm is very real.

This curfew on women's activities

because of the threat of violence by men should be fought, and the insidious attitudes towards women which motivate, and excuse rape in this society must be exposed. Rape is not about sex, it is about power. It is the ultimate threat used to keep women in subjection to men.

All people try to avoid physical harm being inflicted upon them by aggressors, but women who agitate for political action against sexual attack are often *not taken seriously*. The Women's Group at ANU has written several times to the University's Property & Plans Division to request additional lighting on campus. No response. Recently an executive committee of the Halls and Colleges on Campus wrote to the Vice-Chancellor expressing their concern that female students were endangered by inadequate lighting at night. The response was immediate and sympathetic: send Property & Plans a map detailing badly lit locations and it will be done. Wonderful what clout conservative institutions have, isn't it? But let's not leave it to the good intentions of such bodies. Follow-up letters to the V.C. emphasizing the urgency of this matter will prevent it from slipping the official mind. Write *one now*.

Rape ought *not* to be accepted as an unpleasant fact of life, or something which strikes randomly like cancer. It is a despicable and outrageous act of violence which affects the freedom and integrity of *every* woman. Sprawling and well-vegetated, the ANU landscape is pleasing to the eye but hazardous to women at night. Have you ever felt frightened walking into Civic when the library closes? Or negotiating those winding, bush-flanked paths on the way back to your Hall?

Although the suggestions below will do little to change those attitudes and myths which perpetuate rape, women should be aware of the threat to their personal safety and be on both the offensive *and* defensive to help avoid rape and assault. Therefore it may be necessary to implement some practical measures, here and now, such as —

- Take up a self-defence course such as that run by the ANU School of Self Defence, Kingsley St. Hall. Flight may be preferable to fight, but you may not have the choice. Women's defence courses emphasize the importance of an attitude of outrage and action rather than fear and paralysis when threatened by men. They teach self-helping mental and physical responses to replace the frozen immobility we all dread will overtake us in such situations. You don't have to be athletic — it is a matter of skills and strategies rather than physical strength.

- Be concerned about other women. If you have a car, give lifts to women without transport. If you think you see a woman being followed or harassed by a man, act immediately to

help. This may mean joining up with her, or offering her a lift. If the situation precludes these moves get the police, or at least the attention of other people.

- Keep to the better-lit and more popular routes.

- Ride a bicycle instead of walking. It's faster

- Whenever possible, arrange to walk with companions. These can be people you know, or just ask a group going in the same direction as you if they mind if you join them (but don't try drunken louts leaving the Union at midnight!) Refusals are unlikely.

- If you are working or carousing at Uni until late, try always to have enough money on you for a taxi. Disorganisation and lack of foresight means that you take risks. Having to fork out such "protection money" sticks in the throat, it's true, but your safety comes first.

- Look about you carefully when walking or bicycling alone. If you feel uneasy about someone or something, trust your instincts and act immediately to get away.

Women living in the halls and colleges on campus are also living in places of potential danger. It's easy to imagine that there is a magic circle of security around your residence, because to you it's "home". Don't believe it. Every year many women on this campus are raped and assaulted in their college rooms. Consider the following for your protection:

- Lock your door when in your room alone at night or when nobody is around (at mealtimes, during term breaks etc.). There have been cases at ANU in the past when men have looked up room numbers of female residents and tried the doors. This loathsome practice is known in bar-room vernacular as a "door-knocking appeal". The successful outcome is, of course, the rape of a woman.

- When you have a male visitor you don't know very well, keep your door open.

- In the rowdiness of college life, screams for help are often interpreted as squeals of excitement during youthful carryings-on. If you are attacked in a crowded hall, try yelling "Fire!" instead of "Help!" Sadly, it is the nature of the modern urban individual to respond more readily to a threat to his or her own safety than to the distress of another person. If you hear disturbing screams, have the social conscience to investigate them. It may be a false alarm, but wouldn't you want someone to do the same for you?



HARRASSMENT

ACADEMIC RAPE.

Academic rape is a type of severe sexual harassment which is specific to us as students. It is called academic rape because it occurs when a lecturer, tutor or other academic offers to exchange a "pass" or higher grading for sexual favours. It's called rape because it involves a demand made by someone in a powerful position of someone in a powerless position. Within such a power structure free choice cannot be exercised.

Many wimmin students at ANU have found themselves in such a position. However the majority of wimmin don't do anything about their situation and are unaware of its widespread occurrence. The reasons for this unawareness of academic rape are in the very nature of the crime; the power relation between lecturer and student, and the predominance of males in academia and administration at ANU and any other campus.

The greatest danger to wimmin, and the most successful tactic used to keep us silent is the notion that a request for sexual favours happens to us alone. We are oppressed into the interpretation of the situation according to our own conditioning; that we wouldn't want to be without this attention, that we are being 'singled out'; that we must be dreaming or that the situation, if we wish it away long enough didn't really happen at all! When we can't hide the truth of the incident from ourselves, we are alone in our confusion about what to do. We expect that no one will believe us, that we will be considered neurotic and over-sensitive and will find everyone against us, which of course will increase our unrest. This feeling is built right into the system, our patriarchal (male domination and control in political, economic, religious, social and emotional spheres) society holds only one definition of rape — the violent submission of a woman to penile-vaginal penetration.

Academic Rape is not even perceived as a real issue, let alone rape. You have to have impossible amounts of proof before an administration will do any more than warn an "over zealous" member of the male staff. If you try and expose your persecutor, you run the risk of suffering the punishment threatened by the academic. Wimmin at University everywhere have been forced to drop out of courses despite attempts to inform the administration about what's going on and sometimes because of it.

Academic rape is not an isolated act against an isolated woman. Sexual harassment is never an isolated act against isolated wimmin. All forms of sexual coercion from 'petty' sexist references to wimmin to violent crimes are acts against all wimmin because they rest on assumptions about the nature of wimmin. These assumptions are founded in our sexist and unequal society complete with its male

and female socially conditioned stereotypes. We cannot fight the whole structure of society unless we unite and fight together. Wimmin on campus is beginning a campaign geared against sexual harassment at the ANU this term. If you have ever been the victim of sexual harassment by an academic, let us know, or let the Wimmin's centre at 3 Lobelia St. O'Connor know. At both you will find friendly sympathetic wimmin who will treat you with sympathy.

WIMMIN UNDER ATTACK

darwin~

— Rape Crisis Centre has had funding completely cut. Darwin Wimmin's Centre has had their constitution completely co-opted by the government so that it is no longer a feminist run centre.

Feminists have been gaoled for squatting in vacant government buildings (a recent survey revealed that at least 500 people have to sleep on the beaches each night because of the drastic shortage of accommodation.

Feminists have been the victims of slander attacks, brutal police harassment / assault (it is not uncommon for feminists to be followed and beaten in the streets by hired thugs and police) and false arrests. Each and every one of the feminists arrested in the squatting campaign have been told that they will be run out of town by the police.

It is so obvious that feminists can study the action in these places (Darwin and Alice Springs. The Alice Springs Women's Centre was taken over by the right wing in March 1980.) as a microcosm of what is happening elsewhere. Individual motive for involvement in the movement must be clarified now! Wimmin involved for personal reasons only, with no real commitment to an autonomous Wimmin's Movement should get out, as their apathy and obstructiveness is sapping the strength of those who are fighting!

brisbane~

Brisbane Women's Centre (the only one in Queensland) has recently had its funding completely cut. Like Darwin Rape Crisis Centre, Brisbane Rape Crisis and the Wimmin's Information Service will have to function solely on feminists' money (most of us are on pensions or unemployed), time and energy. Rent, phone and electricity bills will not be able to be paid for.

Feminists are determined to keep services functioning at all costs, and welcome any financial or other forms of support. Money etc. can be sent to:
54 Browning St.
West End.
Brisbane, Qld.

melbourne~

Melbourne Wimmin Against Rape (WAR) receives no funding and Western Australia doesn't have a Rape Crisis Centre (only a Sexual Assault Referral Centre attached to a hospital.)

Hobart, Adelaide and Canberra Women's Centres are not certain if they will be funded for the next year and if so, at what level.

The state of feminist refuges and health centres is also under threat, and it seems only a matter of time (probably two years) before ALL funding will be cut. How then are feminists to provide services for women? The time has come when we must seriously examine the means by which we are creating revolutions. The end does not justify the means. The means is the revolution!



SEXISM IN EDUCATION

Theoretically, education for boys and girls is now equal — both share the same teachers and classrooms, participate in the same activities and learn the same curriculum. However, although boys and girls go to the same schools, sit for the same examinations and are taught by the same teachers, they have different school experiences.

If formal equality of educational opportunity is available for both sexes, what causes the lower standard of performance, the greater drop-out rate and the obvious lack of ambition that is common to many girls emerging from our education system? Part of the answer may be contained in a statement by Mead (1962, p. 286):

"Side by side they sit . . . in school to be compared on . . . reading, writing and arithmetic. She sits and challenges him, and beats him at least half the time and often more than half, until high school provides . . . science and shop, where girls aren't encouraged to succeed any longer." (italics mine).

However, lack of encouragement in "science and shop" is not an adequate explanation of why this problem exists. Of course, society at large contributes to the formation of a particular self concept, but a major influence is in the school itself. The whole of school society is infiltrated with a subtle — and sometimes not so subtle — sexist bias perpetuating the inequality of girls' education. It is found in the language we use, school curriculum, teachers' attitudes, and other seemingly insignificant differences such as dress, allocation of tasks, etc.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INFLUENCES

Curriculum

Much of the curricular material used in school adversely influences children, especially girls. Sexism in literature starts in books for the very young, and continues through the primary school levels into secondary school texts. Almost all of the elementary school readers feature boys more frequently than girls in both texts and illustrations. Boys are pictured in active and adventurous roles, using initiative and independence, while girls take passive roles. Boys are usually leaders while girls follow on behind, boys read books to their sisters who sit and listen, boys fly kits while girls watch, boys build sand-castles while girls sit and do nothing.

The primary school materials are no better. From a total of 37 poems and stories in six monthly school magazines there were ten stories and one poem about girls; eight of the stories were about timid or frightened girls, two were about gentle, quiet and kind girls, and the poem told of a girl sitting on a rock daydreaming. The majority of stories depicted boys as adventurous, exploratory, heroic or inventive. In only one instance was a boy gently criticised, and this was for his untidiness and lack of attention, both "acceptable" boyish traits in our society.

Adults in both infants and primary school reading materials are also shown in stereotyped roles. Men have a variety of interesting and active jobs; all of the inventions and experiments written about involve men. Women are mothers, wives, grandmothers, cooking, cleaning or helping. If they happen to be workers they are teachers or nurses. Even in elementary mathematical texts the pattern is continued. In a third grade mental arithmetic book the following is typical of questions asked:

"14 boys and 5 girls rode bikes to school. How many bikes."
or "Of the 19 runners, 9 were girls. How many were boys."

It is therefore not surprising that as boys and girls progress through primary

school their impressions of people which they absorb from their books, are of dominant, superior males and subservient, even inferior, females. This impression is reinforced not only by society outside the school, but also by the society within the school.

Teachers are a major influence in developing children's attitudes. The typical classroom is ideally reasonably quiet and ordered. Obedience, passivity and acquiescence bring approval from the teacher, a fact which little girls are quick to notice and act upon; rowdiness, aggressiveness and independent actions bring disapproval. Where boys are concerned this attitude is in large measure counteracted as outside the classroom they are encouraged in their boisterous play; rebellion in the classroom by boys is also acceptable to most teachers. However, for girls who are expected to be restrained in most of their activities it is a further barrier to developing initiative, drive and independence. Teachers' expectations of children also affect their performances. Promising or bright students tend to get more than their fair share of attention from the teacher, thereby increasing their levels of performance, and proving the teacher right in assuming greater intelligence or ability; slower or quieter children are often neglected by the teacher with detrimental effects.

her career and further education; the factors influencing these decisions are various: teachers, peers, academic success, counselling, to name a few. However, too often there is little in the school environment that nourishes and inspires women and a great deal that discourages, inhibits, and sets a hard, low ceiling on their aspirations.

Studies of overall intelligence testify to the fact that there is little intellectual difference between boys and girls. Although it seems that girls do better in verbally weighted subjects and that boys do better in spatial reasoning and the analytical subjects of maths and science, it is open to question whether this reflects a true picture of learning ability as girls tend to favour studies which develop verbal skills and boys prefer studies which develop mathematical, scientific and spatial reasoning skills. Research conducted into the supposed inferiority of mathematical ability in girls refutes this theory.

Australia-wide surveys confirm that the capacity for girls to do well in mathematics is unquestionable. It is probable that the lesser number of girls attempting higher levels of maths and science is a result of being under less pressure to achieve than boys; The lower failure rate of girls in the levels they do attempt may be because they

"Recent years have seen what appears to be a more enlightened approach. In mixed schools some boys now receive a smattering of domestic science. (I haven't heard of domestic science and child care being taught in boys schools yet though). The purpose of boys receiving a little domestic science is expressed clearly in a more recent Schools Council Bulletin on Home Economics. The aims of the Home Economics course are: '....to give girls an awareness of their potential as women, wives and mothers of the future and to give boys an insight into the responsibilities of running a home and to enable them to cope with domestic emergencies.....'"

Research has shown that "Girls are expected to be more docile, conforming, obedient and generally domesticated or 'good', while originality, self-assertion and 'centre-stage' activities are more often reserved for boys."

In most schools where various tasks are allocated to pupils, boys are given the heavier jobs requiring strength and energy; they move desks and chairs, help with sports equipment, carry loads of books and stationery. By contrast, girls are asked to do such things as help with staffroom washing-up, clean bench tops, sort papers or act as 'receptionists' if the school secretary (always a woman) happens to leave her post for a short time. This type of discrimination confirms girls' opinions of themselves as 'the weaker sex'.

Staff Arrangements

Staffing arrangements too may affect children's attitudes to the roles of males and females. In both infants and primary schools most of the teachers are female. However, the primary school principal is usually a man, as are most inspectors or school administrators. Children notice that the principal is deferred to, consulted about difficult problems, and that the principal issues orders (which are obeyed) and decides matters of school policy. When the principal is a male and the teachers taking directives are female, the image of woman being subordinate to man is strengthened and reinforced.

SECONDARY SCHOOL INFLUENCES

The secondary school acts to reinforce the roles which are brought to the school as a result of past experience. During the years a girl spends at high school she makes vital decisions about

show greater realism about their abilities. In New South Wales studies of IQ of boys and girls taking maths, science and English it was found that in each subject, the mean IQ of girls attempting each level was higher than that of boys attempting the same level."

These findings of ability at senior secondary levels can also be applied to children in junior secondary schools.

A study of gifted children (cited in Encel, 1974, p. 180) emphasised the wastage occurring because of the disinclination of girls to further their education: The study examined the subsequent careers of 679 children who had gained marks of 85% or more in the scholarship examination of 1951, taken on entry to secondary school. The numbers were almost equally divided by sex (340 girls, 339 boys). However, results of this study showed that 93% of boys had taken their Junior Certificate while only 80% of girls did so; 58% of boys took the Senior (matriculation) Certificate compared with 43% of girls; and 37% of boys entered university compared with only 11% of girls. These figures related to both private and public schools.

Why then are girls content with minimal qualifications when it is a fact that in our qualification oriented society, career and further education opportunities are extremely restricted for those not possessing formal qualifications. Various studies carried out of the expectations of adolescent girls seem to indicate that most girls anticipate marriage and domesticity and have very little anticipation of alternatives. A Victorian study of a random sample of fourth form children of both sexes found that marriage and child-rearing were the dominant ex-



"We try to educate girls into becoming imitation men and as a result we are wasting and frustrating their qualities of womanhood at a great expense to the community in addition to their needs as individuals our girls should be educated in terms of their main social function — which is to make for themselves, their children and their husbands a secure and suitable home and to be mothers."

Expectations among girls from all types of schools. Both students and parents tend to feel that it is more important for boys to stay at school longer than girls. A Sydney survey of the aspirations of secondary students concludes that boys aspire to higher occupational levels than girls who tended to opt for the middle occupational range. This includes 'feminine', 'sex-typed' occupations such as typing and office work, hairdressing, infants teaching and air hostessing."

Societal Pressures in Schools

The adolescent girl in secondary school is subjected to strong pressures by her peer group which operates to impose artificial, stereotyped definitions of male and female roles. In fact this subculture becomes a microcosm reflecting in heightened and exaggerated images the sex typing that goes on in society at large. Many girls feel that in order to be popular with boys they have to "hide" their intelligence as boys don't like intellectually superior girls. This demonstrates a widely held image of girls being dependent upon masculine approval and suffering insecurity and self doubt about their own worth if this approval is withheld.

"The girl growing up . . . with brains and spirit learns soon enough to watch her step, 'to be like all the others', not to be herself. She learns not to work too hard, think too often, ask too many questions. In high school . . . girls are reluctant to speak out in class for fear of being typed as 'brains'." (Friedan, 1963)

The aim is not, however, to be thought of as unintelligent; mediocrity is the desired goal. Throughout her education . . . the girl is faced with the dilemma that she must display enough of her abilities to be considered successful, but not too successful. This disguising of intellectual ability becomes habitual, the girl finding it easier to be lazy in her schoolwork; the resultant lower standards of her work convince her that it is incapable of a career demanding intelligence and a high level of ability; her ambition is muted and the career she decides upon (which she may regard only as a stopgap until marriage) is usually a traditional "feminine" occupation, respectable but not too demanding, such as secretarial work, nursing or teaching.

Curriculum

The secondary school curriculum does nothing to inspire girls in school. Women in text books are almost non-existent. If they are included it is often as an afterthought, or they are depicted as being passive, inferior and silly. In a survey of three high school literature texts containing poetry, short stories, plays and literary excerpts, the authors and subjects of the works were almost exclusively male. In one book in which there were 29 poems, only one was about a woman, and she was a criminal about to be hanged by her executioner/lover; there were 28 stories, five of which were about women. One told of witches in the seventeenth century, and in a play featuring a man and a woman as the only characters, the woman's attitude is typified by the quote "Though I am only a woman I think I am at heart as brave as you."

All of the "female" animals in the books were handicapped by being blind, meek or helpless. In contrast the works about men and boys told of adventurous, courageous and enterprising people.

Another book, *In His Own Image*, used by the same school contains six chapters on various subjects about life in the twentieth century. Four of the chapters have "man" as their subjects, e.g. "Man Alone", "Action Man", and the last chapter entitled "Man and Woman" focuses entirely on the sexual side of love, marriage and domesticity. It concludes with an article on Esther Vilar's book *The Manipulated Man*, a satirical book which is, to say the least, degrading to women. The article does not exactly approve of what the book is saying, but neither is there much disapproval. The article quotes excerpts from the book, such as ". . . men . . . are incapable of seeing women as they really are: with nothing else to offer but a vag-

science or biology texts either — apparently women don't make discoveries or conduct research.

Sporting activities also tend to emphasize the differences that are supposed to exist between boys and girls, with the insinuation being made that boys' activities are more important than girls' activities. Boys are encouraged in the more energetic sports, are able to participate in more team sports, and are acclaimed for sporting achievements. For girls sport is considered as a pastime, to be taken lightly and non-competitively. Physical education is often segregated with boys being offered a large variety of demanding gymnastic activities and girls being limited to less demanding calisthenics, or folk dancing.

The choice of subjects available to both boys and girls in the secondary school today is supposedly unrestricted by sex. In the past practical subjects such as domestic science and needlework were available only to girls, and woodwork and metalwork were available only to boys. At coeducational schools these subjects are now open to both sexes; this opportunity is, however, not taken advantage of as girls still opt for the "feminine" subjects and boys for the "masculine". Socialisation seems to be the

ated.

In boys' schools or girls' schools the choice is usually even more restricted as the subjects offered are limited to the domestic arts for girls and to woodwork, etc. for boys.

It seems that the sex role ideology operating in society and in school places a limit upon the expectations of girls, who see their futures as being confined to home and family. Most Australians seem to feel that education should fit children for their future roles in society, these roles being perceived as "breadwinner" for the boy thus necessitating higher qualification, and domestic life for the girl making extended academic learning superfluous and any ambition for an interesting career unnecessary.

So long as our education system and society perpetuates sexism women will be unable to fulfil their potential. Important in overcoming the problem of sexism in society is seeing how we can educate children along non-sexist lines rather than re-enforcing the traditional stereotypes. This means changes at many levels through the curricula structure and the attitudes, ideas, values, etc. that underly our education system. It also involved provision of nursery facilities and for boys to be educated to see child rear-



ina, two breasts and some punch-cards programmed with idle, stereotyped chatter", or ". . . women, in fact, are useless in every sphere". He then comments towards the end of the article "And yet . . . somewhere beneath the thicket of her halfbaked thinking there is a solid core of truth." To an impressionable adolescent boy or girl this type of reading must surely create an image of the female which is inferior, deceitful and altogether undesirable.

History texts contain few references to women, either in world or Australian history. Where they are referred to, it is usually in about one sentence, or as "wife of . . ." or "mother of . . ." some famous man. Women are rarely mentioned in

cause of the phenomenon; boys in particular are sensitive to criticism from their peers and are afraid of being jeered at for being "sissy". If girls were socially free to take the subjects of woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing, this could have a great influence upon their freedom to choose from a wider range of careers; it is quite probable that many more girls would enter the fields of traditionally male occupations such as mechanics, carpentry, and the electrical trades if they had the background of basic skills needed to take apprenticeships in these trades. If it were made compulsory rather than elective for both sexes to take both masculine and feminine practical subjects, the traditional sexist bias would eventually be elimin-

ing as much their concern as girls. Only then will society begin to allow women and girls a fuller participation in society. The changes in the education system require, as others have pointed out, not just more of the same for girls, but a fundamental rethink on how we can teach and what we teach.

MY DADDY WANTS ME TO DO SOCIAL WORK BEFORE I MARRY A MILLIONAIRE

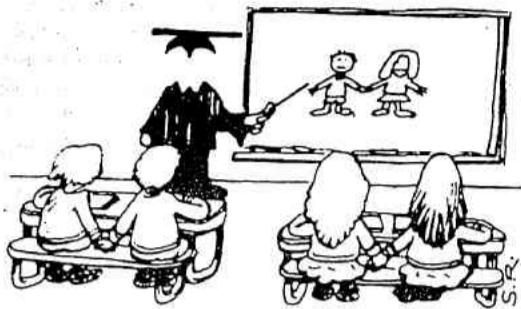


"The incentive for girls to equip themselves for marriage and home-making is genetic with the less able girls, schools can and should make more adjustments to the fact that marriage looms much larger and nearer in the pupil's eye than it has done before; her interest in dress, personal appearance and the problems of human relations should be given a central place in her education."

"But referring to boys.... "At this stage their thoughts turn more often to a career and only secondly to marriage and the family."

WHEN WILL WE SEE

GAY STUDIES AOU



To do a thorough investigation of homosexuality in tertiary curricula would be a massive undertaking. Although largely ignored from history, literature etc., there are many areas where homosexuality comes up in student's course, in a wide range of subjects.

To give a general picture of homosexuality in tertiary studies, here are descriptions of relevant courses from several campuses from the lecturers' point of view, a series of comments from students who have been in classes where homosexuality has come up, a report on the Gay Studies course at Flinders University, and a contribution by Dennis Altman from the AUS Homosexual Resource Book on Gay Studies.

From University of Queensland, a lecturer from the English Department describes the courses on 20th Century Literature & Society, Women's Studies and Women Writers. "We do works by various homosexuals and lesbian writers, and consider them as such. In 20th Century Literature and Society, we do *Aarons, Rod, Orlando, La Batarde, Kaddish*. In Women's Studies and Women Writers, we also do *Violette Ceouc*, and next year we will probably do *The Cook and the Carpenter*. I usually do a general lecture on lesbian women writers. There is a need for better resources. The response from students is 'Lecturers who want to discuss this kind of thing must be homosexual themselves'. There is surprise and interest that there are a lot of homosexual writers. Homosexuals in the class are encouraged. Sexual politics is one of the main themes for 20th Century Literature and Society."

At Sturt CAE, homosexuality is a major part of the Health Education course. The lecturers say there is always a need for more books, articles, films, speakers and resources.

In the History Department at University of WA, lecturer Dr Hugh Own says homosexuality comes up in History 230 (South Asian History) in relation to the period of the Sultans of Delhi.

From the Social Work Department at UWA: Homosexuality is included in "Social problems and social issues elective, on human sexuality, with two two-hour seminars directly on homosexuality. No formal references are used, as students are encouraged to seek their own reading material." The response from the students described by the lecturer is fully accepting and interested to learn more and relate it to themselves and their own experiences. The opinion of the lecturer is that homosexuality ought to be treated in this department as part of human sexuality and not as a separate course.

In the Psychology Department at UWA, homosexuality comes into Psychopathology. A guest speaker is invited, and that part of the course lasts for two lecture sessions. The response of the students, says the lecturer, is to "acknowledge it as a valid sexual orientation".

At Bendigo CAE, one lecture and one tutorial in the Deviance and alternative course is on homosexuality. Dennis Altman is the main text used. The lecturer describes the students' attitude: "in written work there is empathy, but it is not seen as any sort of crusading issue."

The vast majority of students questioned said that there was no Gay Studies course on their campus. A few had major sections of their courses where homosexuality was discussed. Nearly all had minor parts of their courses which included homosexuality.

Some examples of these are:

- Medical 3rd year course at Monash includes a brief but very accepting unit in sexual diversity.
- At UNE the "Sociology of Power and Social Control" course had a good response in relation to homosexuality.
- At WAIT there is a sociology unit focusing on homosexuality in relation to general oppression of sexuality. The usual poofter jokes are made to staff members conducting the unit.
- At Kuring-gai College, a very positive and supportive course on sex roles and sexism in general studies.

In many other courses, such as General Philosophy, Social Work, Psychology, Government, Politics, Social Medicine, Behavioural Sciences, etc. at many different campuses. Some were presented with negative attitudes, such as Education Studies at Kingston CAE, or Psychology at UNSW for example. But the majority were encouraging favourable attitudes.

At Sydney University the Social Work dispute of 1977 forced homosexuality as a part of human sexuality to be adopted in the Social Work course.

In July 1976, the first fully accredited 'gay studies' type course in an Australian university got underway in the Philosophy discipline at Flinders University in Adelaide.

Called *Sexuality and Politics*, the course initially ran for one semester but this year (and we hope in the future) it has been extended over the whole year.

It was initiated and organised by a group of students active in the homosexual movement: Peter Page and John Lee, then Philosophy students, and a postgraduate, Tim Corrigan. Throughout 1977 it has received considerable support and guidance from Elizabeth Storey, Philosophy staff member responsible for Feminism and Women's Studies, which at least in the short term, has guaranteed its continuation.

In fact, the link with Feminism and Women's Studies via Liz Storey is more than simply a case of feminists and gay liberationists working co-operatively. For *Sexuality and Politics* is not simply a gay studies course in the tradition of American universities, with which some people will be familiar. There the method is usually a 'multi disciplinary' approach to homosexuality, via literature, sociology, psychology and so on. Rather than do this, *Sexuality and Politics* aims to take as a starting point the critiques of the present structure of sexuality generally in society that has come from the homosexual and feminist movements. Or as the course outline puts it more lengthily:

"A consideration of theoretical approaches to sexuality in order to advance the critique initiated by the feminist and gay liberation movements. Initially the course will examine aspects of sexual and familial organisation in past societies in order to suggest that such diversity raises important questions in the face of the common assumption that sexuality and the whole of our private lives are something 'natural', being unchanging and hence beyond analysis. There will be an evaluation of orthodox psychiatric and sociological approaches to sexuality and an effort to see whether their weaknesses might be remedied by Freud's theory of mental life and Marx's theory of historical materialism. The course will then deal with theorists such as Reich, Marcuse and Mitchell and their efforts to arrive at a satisfactory political analysis of sexuality which is informed by both Freud and Marx and it will consider the problems remaining for the development of sexual liberation theory within historical materialism."

If you'd like to know more about *Sexuality and Politics* write to:

Elizabeth Storey, Philosophy Discipline, Flinders University
Bedford Park, SA, 5042.

or Tim Carrigan, 3 Phillips Street, Kensington, SA 5068

From: *The Homosexual Research Project*, AUS



GAY CONTACTS:

If you want to meet other lesbians, or even just have a good time with other wimmin and don't know how to make the move, some of these groups will be able to help you -

- Women on Campus: meets Monday lunch-time at 1 pm in the Women's Room on the top floor of the Union Building or make contact through the S.A. Office, Ph: 48 7818.
- The Women's Centre, 3 Lobelia Street, O'Connor (ph: 47 8070) has a lesbian discussion group, usually on Saturday afternoons.
- Watch out for women's dances at the Ainslie Hotel or the Dickson. Likewise the Dickson has a gay bar in the Federation Lounge on Friday night - this is mixed.
- 2XX (ph. 49 4512) has a Gay Radio Collective that can give you info. on discussion groups and other areas of interest for homosexuals.
- A.C.T. Gay Solidarity meets at the Health Promotions Centre on Childers Street. This is primarily for male homosexuals.
- Better blatant than latent!

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND CAREER COUNSELLING

Children make occupational and career choices from kindergarten on, and the school assists both directly and indirectly in this dynamic process. Not only do schools provide certification and qualifications which preselect people for certain occupations, they also communicate via the curriculum, the textbooks and other teaching resources, teacher expectations and peer group pressures what the potential occupations, the 'right' level of aspiration, for a student might be.

Choosing a future job was seen by the school going section of the sample of Sydney youth studied by Connell et al as the most pressing problem facing them.

Sources of information about jobs included family, friends and random reports in the mass media as well as school.

In addition to these informal processes, schools (and the practices vary in each State) may provide students with specific information about occupations and may provide guidance and counselling in occupational choice.

A number of other government and private agencies beyond the school operate vocational counselling and career advice services and between them produce vast quantities of literature, pamphlets, booklets, newspapers, films and most recently video tapes. The major agencies are the Australian Department of Labour and Immigration, and State Departments of Labour. On a less pervasive level many parent groups arrange occasional 'career nights' for parents, teachers and students to discuss their vocational plans.

Out of all these groups and amongst all the vocational and career literature there are only rare instances of an appreciation of the changing social role of women. It is refreshing to read Rennie Lyne-Brown's advice to girls: "When you consider your career, think about the future beyond the next few years . . . do not consider marriage or a career, consider both . . ." and she goes on to refer to women's changing work patterns. As she points out: "A boy need feel no conflict between his work and his personal life; he plans for both, one to complement the other. Girls have not been encouraged to do this in the same way."

How the issue of work in relation to other life goals is handled in vocational guidance is of central importance. On the other hand, the pretence that career/family is an either/or choice for girls is demonstrated to be obsolete by the number of women who combine both. On the other hand, advice which ignores the whole issue reinforces the outmoded view absorbed from other sources that for girls work is only incidental to the primary goal of marriage and family and does not help girls to handle the conflict they may in fact experience between career commitment and cultural expectations of women as homemakers. Serious consideration of sex roles as part of the school curriculum is an important aspect of any useful vocational advice.

As Healy points out, it is in adolescence when the problems of development of sexual, social and personal identity are at a height that a girl is making her occupational choice.



"It is aggressive and unfeminine to compete with her male peers; and to be successful in such competition is likely to threaten the possibility of a successful heterosexual relationship."

Competing for traditionally male jobs may well evoke anxiety of this sort. Using a theory of occupational choice developed on men will mean that this conflict between sexual and vocational identity for girls goes unrecognised.

SEXISM IN VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

In examining vocational advice, what we find is that traditional attitudes and advice towards women entering the labour force predominate; careers literature and resource material is preoccupied with an out of date understanding of women and their changing contribution in the labour force. Employment opportunities are constantly sex role stereotyped in their presentation, both verbal and visual, and in many cases blatantly discriminate against women. Many occupations are presented as if they were inaccessible to girls. One of the most common practices in the literature is the use of male pronouns, 'he', 'him', 'his', with the result that it is unclear whether females are included. For example, the Careers Guide published by the Education Department in Queensland does not make clear whether Australian airlines will offer employment to women as airline pilots, though it does say 'Young men contemplating careers in aviation should. . .' Again in the Careers Guide there is some ambiguity as to whether women are ever employed as air traffic controllers, and for that matter whether they can obtain employment as doctors. These types of examples could be multiplied at length.

In a submission to the Commission of Inquiry into the Status of Women in Queensland, the Queensland Teachers Union drew attention to sex bias in the presentation of career information in booklets prepared by the Australian Department of Labour entitled *Choosing a Career*. Occupations are sex role stereotyped and females are encouraged to enter only a narrow range of jobs: "The great majority of these books 'steer' females to seek employment in the more repetitive, less rewarding areas of an occupation irrespective of ability. Many are blatant in this respect." Said the Queensland Teachers Union submission. They found that photographs in the booklets are unfavourably biased against women. Females are infrequently represented and where they do appear are represented in assistant roles only, helping a male.

The Vocational Guidance leaflets published by the New South Wales Department of Labour and Industry include evident sex role stereotyping

in trades where there are regular and dominant references to members of the male sex, e.g. 'A boy intending to become a watchmaker or jeweller should . . .', 'Lads entering the special shipbuilding trades need . . .', 'The drawing office man needs . . .'

A content analysis of vocational guidance and material in New South Wales found that it gave the overwhelming impression that few occupations are open to women, there are slightly more which they may enter and many which women are persuaded not to enter, or which are closed to women.

The material analysed was career appraisals of 55 occupations listed in *Short Appraisal of Employment Prospects in Selected Careers* produced by the Commonwealth Employment Service in New South Wales. This handbook is used in schools and in Commonwealth Employment Service offices throughout the State by officers of the Department of Labour and Immigration. Booklets published by private organisations were also found to be unfavourably biased against females, either ignoring them or directing them to inferior status jobs compared with males.

more news....

RUBELLA VACCINE - COMING READY OR NOT . . .

The beginning of January in New Zealand saw a short-lived controversy about the rubella immunisation programme in schools. The National Health Institute's Chief virologist, Dr William Hamilton, publicly expressed his concern at blanket immunisation of all schoolgirls, and raised the possibility that the vaccine used by the Department could be a cancer-inducing hybrid virus. Dr Hamilton is at present being prosecuted under the public service section of the Official Secrets Act for speaking out against the Health Department.

The case against mass immunisation is founded on the claim that up to 80% of girls will already have natural immunity. And if one feels that it is still essential for girls to have immunisation against rubella, then tests can be carried out to see if the girls are not immune to rubella. But the department has decided against these tests for 11-year olds because it would be too expensive, disregarding the danger of immunization. Dr Jim Kelly, editor of the NZ General Practitioners' Society stated, 'In medicine, it is frequently a matter of balance, of weighing up costs against results.' (Heard that before?)

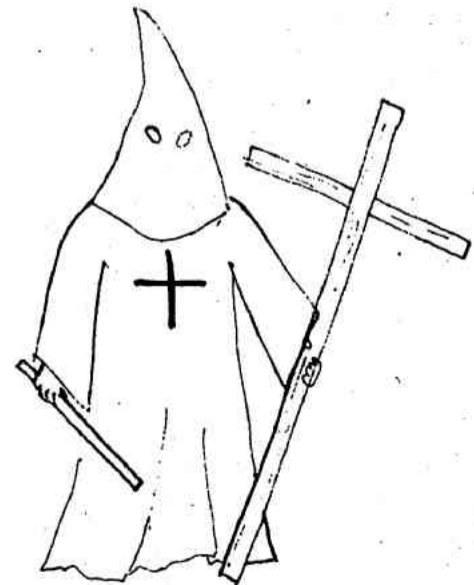
UNEMPLOYMENT AND GIRL SCHOOL LEAVERS

- * The proportion of unemployment amongst young people in Australia today is growing rapidly in relation to overall unemployment.
- * More than 1/3 of the unemployed are under 21.
- * Unemployment rates for women have been consistently well above the rates for men, and the *unemployment rate for teenage girls is currently higher than for any other group*. In May 1978, 17.4% of females aged 15-19 were unemployed (compared with 14.7% of males in the same age group). Girls from working-class families, migrant families and country areas are the worst affected within that group.
- * In January 1979 30.3% of young women born overseas were unemployed compared to 21.5% of Australian-born-women. These figures have been described as underestimating the true picture.
- * In February 1979, there were 36,409 young women in Australia looking for work as sales assistants and there were 813 vacancies. 26,984 girls were seeking the 948 vacancies for clerks, typists and office machinists.
- * Over 70% of young unemployed women are now seeking jobs in the clerical, typing and sales areas, but because of technological change, many of these jobs have ceased to exist.
- * There will be an average of approximately 1/4 of a million young people entering the Australian labour market each year till the end of the 1980's.

KLAN SHOOTS WOMEN

Four black women in Tennessee were shot by three male Ku Klux Klan members. A 90 year old woman was shot in the next and face after an anti-job discrimination demonstration by blacks.

Source: Off Our Backs, June 1980.



A Woman Of The Future – a feminist review

David Ireland's latest novel won this year's Miles Franklin Award, a literary accolade already bestowed upon Ireland twice: in 1971 for *The Unknown Industrial Prisoner*, and in 1976 for *The Glass Canoe*. These earlier novels have seemed to me disturbing in their treatment of women, because the only ways in which women are presented are as the willing or unwilling victims of male selfishness and aggression. Such presentation could be an indictment of sexism. However, Ireland maintains authorial neutrality through a peripatetic sympathy with a number of characters and points of view, most of them misogynist. In *A Woman of the Future* he shows his hand. This novel utilizes an imaginative leap into the female consciousness, and shows a progression in Ireland's thinking about women in an androcentric culture like our own.

Ireland is a master portraitist and satirist of contemporary Western life. His books are severe, disconcerting and often funny exposures of the modern malaises: the ordinary citizen's willing seduction and exploitation by huge capitalist concerns, and his self-fulfilling belief that there are no individual or social alternatives to corruption and unhappiness (*The Unknown Industrial Prisoner*); the oblivion, security and comfort of the pub culture (*A Glass Canoe*). In these two novels his fictional worlds are male and the female characters, often stereotypes, pullulate on the edges of male lives. Their importance is as sexual or domestic adjuncts: the club whores in *Prisoner*, and the wives and lays of the drinkers in *A Glass Canoe*. Women are rarely talked to, and most often talked about disparagingly or animalistically. Sometimes the relationships with women are superficially benign. In *A Glass Canoe* 'My Darling', the narrator's girlfriend, is a delightfully warm and lovable character who invokes a rush of affection in him every time she runs smilingly to embrace him.

She kisses the hubcaps on his car with similar enthusiasm, and drops everything whenever he phones. One feels that such characterizations must be satirizing sexist relationships. 'My Darling' is a parody of complaisant and nurturant femininity. For all his affection, the narrator has no compunction in betraying her trust to sleep with other women, and no scruples in denying her the same privilege. It is frustrating that Ireland presents such things without apparent criticism, in an even tone, and never entirely dissociates himself from reprehensible male characters. He deplores their acts, certainly: the subjection, humiliation and sexual exploitation of women is clearly abhorred in the incident in *A Glass Canoe* where a man actually pisses all over a woman he has just had intercourse with. It is made even more pointed by the fact that she entreats him to do so, and gets sexual pleasure from it. Ireland pictures this in all its sordidness and anti-eroticism. It seems as shocking and sad to him as to us.

Should we see Ireland as male apologist or as concerned objector in his attitude to the sexist ethos? Is it possible for a male writer (or any man) to identify with, understand and like his own sex, and yet entirely dissociate himself from certain basic assumptions which have made them what they are? David Ireland strikes me as a forceful, humane and intelligent thinker. He is Ralph Naderish in his insights into the urban community and its relationship with civil and business powers. He knows intimately the mental and emotional patterns and defences of ordinary men. He illuminates with satire and pathos. But in these earlier novels he is braver with issues less close to home than maleness.

A Woman of the Future offer a different and more rewarding perspective on women in society. A complete turnabout, Ireland presents a woman's life and experience in the first person. He writes as Alethea Hunt recording her childhood, adolescence and early womanhood. Ireland takes interesting liberties with realism, distorting modernity and projecting it slightly into the future. In *Prisoner* Ireland had tampered with history, telescoping convictism

into an Australian present of servitude to overseas-owned multinationals. The world of *A Woman of the Future* is a partial copy of our own except that it is worse, and in some ways a fantastical invention. People are divided into the Servants (those who serve in order to rule) and the Free, a vast mass of the somewhat less able and intelligent who are officially unemployed. Category is decided by school performance, and the potential Frees are marked by their propensity to 'change' in grotesque ways – for example, growing a coffin from their body, or exhibiting cuts and bruises whenever they feel self-critical. This society is competitive, hypocritical and brutal. Children play games in which the sensitive and weak are actually injured, rather than just the losers. Viciousness, cunning and one-upmanship are cultivated in children by their experience, although the authorities pay lip-service to qualities of generosity and co-operation. It is of course our own world with its aggressive and conventionally masculine attributes exaggerated. Alethea's family life is, by contrast, weirdly unconventional 'weirdly' because it presents a reversal rather than coalescence of conventional sex-roles. When Alethea is seven, her mother switches from a devoted and loving parent to an impatient workaholic, effectively opting out from family life. Her father takes over the child-rearing and domestic organization, answering Alethea's questions and giving her guidance.

I would suggest that Ireland is not only satirizing sexism, but levelling criticism at a certain style of feminism epitomized by German Greer's *A Female Eunuch*: That is, that in order to change the subservient position of women, women must become as ruthlessly self-oriented and competitive as men have traditionally been. Ireland reasonably sees the same danger for women as for men who pursue social power: a less than full human existence, and alienation in their personal lives. In the character of Alethea, Ireland creates a woman who is unselfconsciously feminist (a woman of the future?), but operating within an androcentric society. He offers interesting perspectives and useful reflections on both feminism and sexism. Alethea's mother refuses to allow her daughter anything pink, a fairly conventional sideswipe at the consciously feminist mother. But she also exhorts Alethea continually in the belief that she is intelligent, successful, beautiful, brave, healthy, and, in a nutshell, a woman of the future. While

Alethea is growing up, she occasionally detaches from her obsessive note-taking to reinforce this concept of the female achiever. Alethea is successful at school and play, but suffers anxiety about the high standard to which she aspires – a hint that, like conventional parents with their sons, feminist parents can place too much pressure on their daughters to conform to the ideal type? Alethea's fleeting fears and uncertainties are paralleled and intensified in the schoolmate who wants to be a surgeon, but develops

a rash of vulvas over her body which precludes any career at all. Alethea doesn't always live up to her expectations. Though she often beats boys in physical and mental exercises and

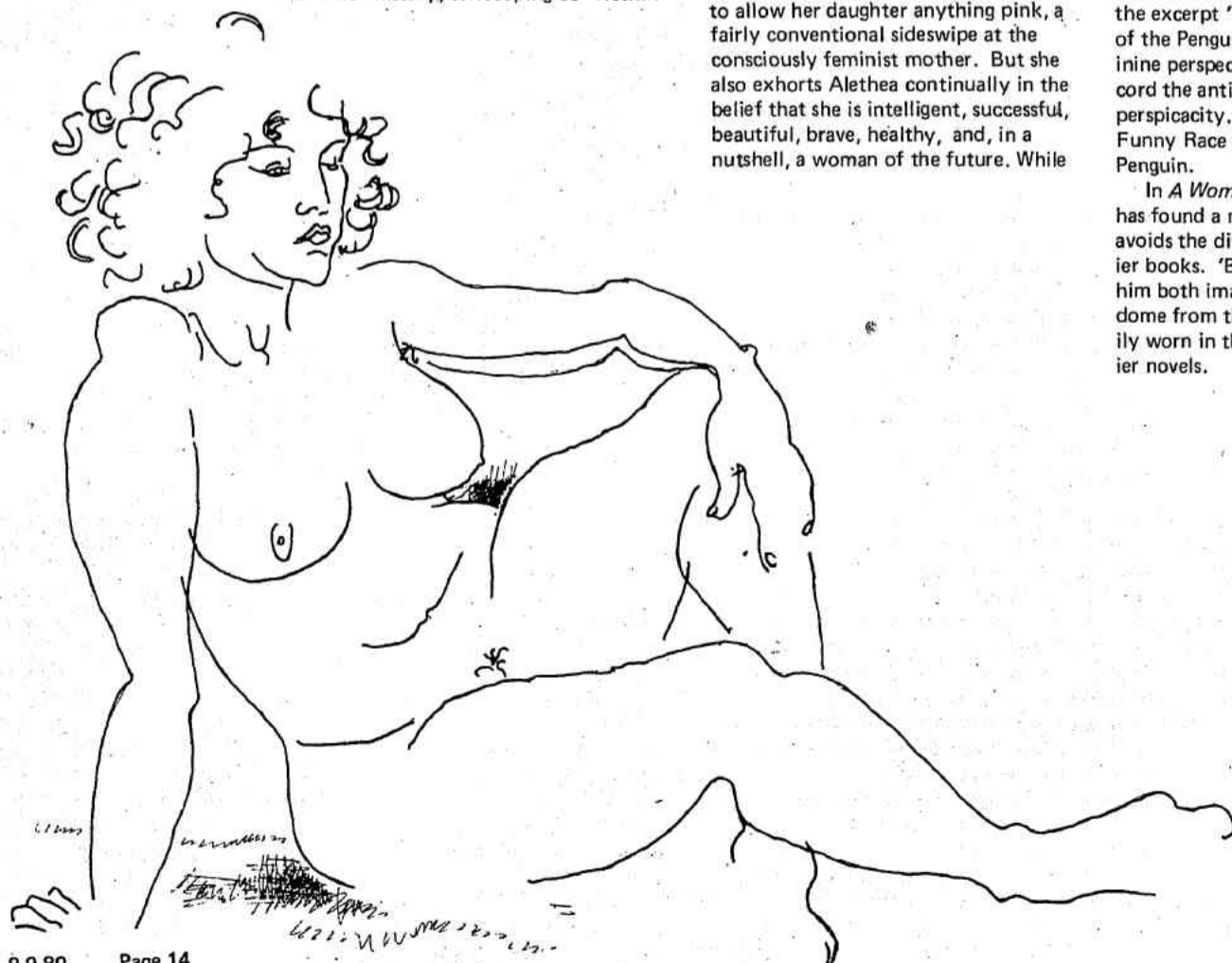
learns to be as self-seeking and exploitative as they in sexual adventures, she finds that winning is often a delusion. Rather than giving her credit and acceptance for a display of agility in tree-climbing, the boys at school try to outdo her. Though she learns that sexual peremptoriness works with some men, Alethea's demands do not give her 'the touch of love' she craves. A final irony: Alethea's 'change' at the end of the novel (and remember, change means failure) is contemporaneous with her final year examination results. At 490 points out of a possible 500, she comes second to a boy with 491. A whimsical ending – or a serious reflection on the direction feminism is taking in contemporary life?

In this novel Ireland has pinpointed the crisis of modern feminism by projecting it forward in one direction. Must feminism adjust to the mainstream of modern culture, training girls up to become pseudo-men in order to compete for power and privilege in an unequal and vicious society – or can it work to undermine such qualities and recreate the world with a human face? Alethea is not without compassion and sensibility: she is often outraged by cruelty and injustice, and sometimes champions the underdog. She is worried by her inability to reciprocate love with men, and understands that something is wrong that she cannot. An example of wayward feminism?

Ireland's book must be commended for its often amazing insights into the feminine consciousness. An example is the excerpt 'Time and Women' on p. 231 of the Penguin edition. Adopting a feminine perspective, he is also able to record the antics of men with wonderful perspicacity. I recommend 'What a Funny Race Men Are' on p. 314 of the Penguin.

In *A Woman of the Future* Ireland has found a narrative method which avoids the divided loyalties of his earlier books. 'Being a woman' allows him both imaginative and personal freedom from the sexual prejudice uneasily worn in the man's world of the earlier novels.

Andrea Mitchell



POETRY

THE APPLICANT

First, are you our sort of a person?
Do you wear
A glass eye, false teeth or a crutch,
A brace or a hook,
Rubber breasts or a rubber crotch,

Stitches to show something's missing? No, no? Then
How can we give you a thing?
Stop crying.
Open your hand.
Empty? Empty. Here is a hand

To fill it and willing
To bring teacups and roll away headaches
And do whatever you tell it.
Will you marry it?
It is guaranteed

To thumb shut your eyes at the end
And dissolve of sorrow.
We make new stock from the salt.
I notice you are stark naked.
How about this suit —

Black and stiff, but not a bad fit.
Will you marry it?
It is waterproof, shatterproof, proof
Against fire and bombs through the roof.
Believe me, they'll bury you in it.

Now your head, excuse me, is empty.
I have the ticket for that.
Come here, sweetie, out of the closet.
Well, what do you think of *that*?
Naked as paper to start

But in twenty-five years she'll be silver,
In fifty, gold.
A living doll, everywhere you look.
It can sew, it can cook,
It can talk, talk, talk.

It works, there is nothing wrong with it.
You have a hole, it's a poultice.
You have an eye, it's an image.
My boy, it's your last resort.
Will you marry it, marry it, marry it?

Sylvia Plath

HOUSEWIFE

Some women marry houses.
It's another kind of skin; it has a heart,
a mouth, a liver and bowel movements.
The walls are permanent and pink.
See how she sits on her knees all day,
faithfully washing herself down.
Men enter by force, drawn back like Jonah
into their fleshy mothers.
A woman *is* her mother.
That's the main thing.

Anne Sexton



Social Security visiting inspector semi-blues

Woke up this morning round about nine o'clock
been up three times in the night to feed the baby
and sure wasn't feeling so hot;
I looked around with gummy eyes at walls,
floor, ceiling, baby, dirty dishes from the night before,
when there's a knock
and it's the Social Security visiting inspector
coming in through my door.

"We never come unannounced," he says.
"Not even at four in the morning; we always knock.
There's no *man* hiding under your bed, dear Miss Object?
Good; I didn't mean to give *you* a shock.
So kindly remove the excrement from that chair,"
he says to me,
"and I'll sit down and ask you a lot of extremely personal
questions - dear Miss Case
If you co-operate it'll be over quite quickly
you'll see."

"(excuse me I can see your titties, dear Miss Boobs
kindly feed your infant later, I can't concentrate
on putting you down,)"

"Now tell me dear young unmarried mother
Miss Fallen Woman," he says to me with a frown,
"What's the birthday of your child
and when were you born
and who was your next of kin?
Was it your father or your mother
your sister or your brother?
Who put it to you?
Who put it in?

We're keeping tabs on you
We're keeping tabs on you
We want to know the father of your child
Tell us the names of all your friends
their addresses - it never ends
So we can trace you wherever you go
Tell us the number of your doctor
the number of your car
the name of your solicitor
you'll need one when we're through with you —"

"Tell us the father of your child, his name
and his address, his occupation -
I hope he's a good earner
So he can make an honest woman of you
and get you off our hands
and look after you as a real man should!
... now tell me dear Miss Legs,
how many times, and on this bed?
You obviously need someone to look after you?"

Got the SS shakes, I could hardly say a word,
it's not funny when you're doling out the pennies,
but I knew what's what, *and what I needn't say*
so I didn't, and he couldn't and in the end he went away,
and I said, any babies of your own, by the way
and he blushed and said "Miss Dropout
I'm only married six months
no way, got to save for the car, for the wife ...

... time is flying!" So he flew!
and I knew

they may be keeping tabs on me

Mr Inspector

but
not
like
on you!

They're keeping tabs on you
They're keeping tabs on you!

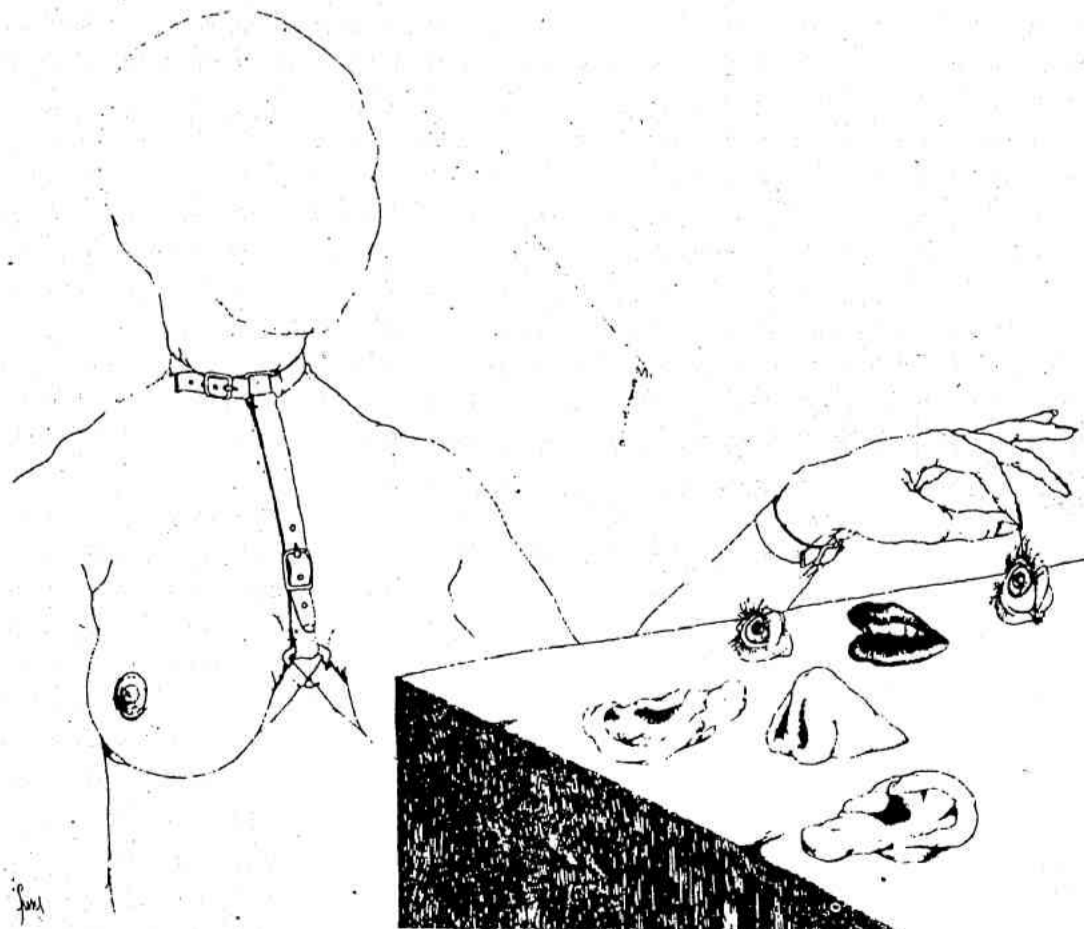
Diana Scott

LESBIAN

Your petals open wet
to cradle my fingers
and I think tomorrow
I will scrawl
in red paint
on the town hall
that behind the word lesbian
stinking in men's mouths
rhyming with perversion and revulsion,
was always this word
with a soft 'l' like in laughter and lilac
and an 's' that tenderness dissoles into
as your petals open wet
to cradle my fingers.

Paula Jennings

Page 15



Poetry

Annunciation.

(dedicated to the five men who beat up my faggot-husband at dawn on Sunday, February 25, 1968)

I don't know you. I didn't call you up, either, this time, though I was aware as always, of the restlessness that sent him out for a short walk, to give love, perhaps, or to buy cigarettes.

Was one of you his father, violent with tenderness for that strange particle of yourself you couldn't understand, but could destroy, at least? Was one of you his lover, envious of what you already shared beyond the same male body: his talent, intellect, art, though not his willingness to be hated for their use?

Was one of you his closet-friend, passionate to affirm a love you must have felt needing affirming, if only to deny it afterwards?

Was one of you an acquaintance, sophisticated as the cocktail-party man who told him he was mad, naive, fanatic, and perverted?

Was one of you his brother, bitter as our 'gay' neighbour whose stereo-type-kindled misogyny consumed even his own pain, raging to see us try and cross his/your/my boundaries?

I can't tell anymore. I don't know you. And this husband I hold in my arms, who is he who lavishes my lap with such uncyclical blood? How did this frail farmer's silhouette fall, a bird-sized sniper, from its nest, brought down by five grenades' overkill? His narrow eyes are empty. Why does this black flesh I clutch whimper like some large cat long after its head has been clubbed five times flat by dutiful policemen? I can't tell anymore. Or would Vietnamese and Panther suffering be put aside when offered a more basic bond—to join the five original also oppressed of course white workingclass American men In a brotherhood convened to prove each member capable of beating up a faggot? I have seen what I have seen.

You are not rhetoric or theories or statistics, you are real. Real as the silver Our Lady dangling from the bull-neck that craned to see the effect of the ten fists crushing his skull, not knowing, never knowing that those blows release only more gaudy hallucinations of freedom rainbowing from his heart through all your grey matter; real as his mad poems, his naive love, his fanatic revolution, his perverted struggles to change; real as my young husband dying before his murder in Detroit; real as my husband tortured before his execution in Saigon; real as the rape of faggots by yes look until your eyes weep red clots of despair the Attica freedom-fighters; real as his own long hair, his flowing shirt, his shaven, unmanned face, his smile that met the fury of your weekend ritual kicks: to pulverize some hippie commie bastard queer before speeding off, unlicensed, back to Queens in time for early Mass.

What are your dreams like, you five? What do you notice in your locker rooms, your caucus rooms, your gyms and bowling alleys? Whose bodies rivet you when they smash in lust on your football fields? Which thoughts of poolrooms, barrooms, war most harden you before, respondent in sadistic maleness, you rape "your" women?

I know you. You are real. I spit this at you, five straight patriotic clean Americans, and at any who despite whatever else oppression they have known still choose the luxury of a united front of masculinist pride: I will not bear your children, no. I will not bear you whatever line you hand me for your rapes or revolutions. I know why you hate strong women, fear gentle men. I will abort your contempt, your terror, your babies by my own hand. For I am pregnant with murder. The pains are coming faster now, and not all your anesthetics nor even my own screams can stop them. My time has come.

Robyn Morgan

The Invisible Woman.

The invisible woman in the asylum corridor sees other quite clearly, including the doctor who patiently tells her she isn't invisible — and pities the doctor, who must be mad to stand there in the asylum corridor talking and gesturing to nothing at all.

The invisible woman has great compassion. So, after a while, she pulls on her body like a rumpled glove, and switches on her voice to comfort the elated doctor with words. Better to suffer this prominence than for the poor young doctor to learn he himself is insane. Only the strong can know that.

Robyn Morgan



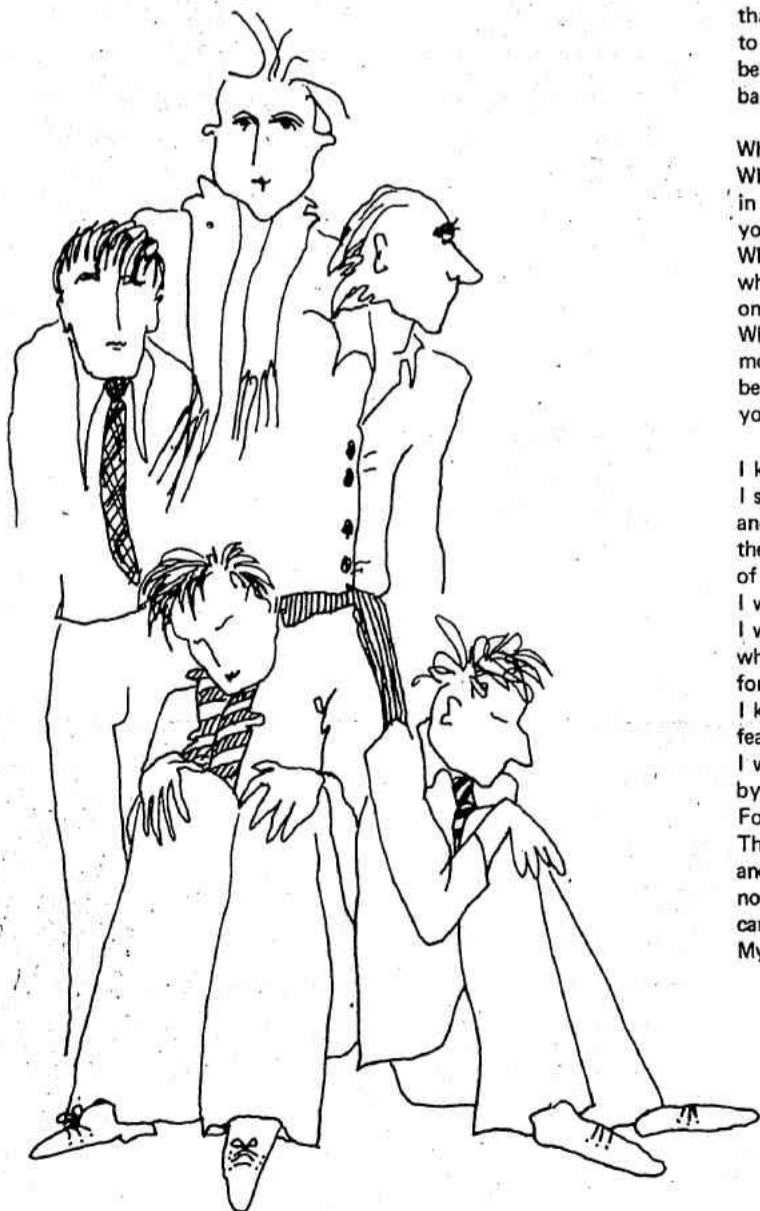
Dressed to kill

Yes, I realise my baggy dungarees just make the shape of my bum more mysterious and my wellies might hold a certain allure for rubber fetishists and my hair (unbrushed for a week) looks untamed and my fat jumper simply emphasizes my essential femininity

but

if you don't take your slimey masculine eyes off me I will whip out the collapsible submachine gun I always carry in my sexy old haversack and blast you off the face of the earth.

Just thought I'd mention it.



IMAGES FROM THE BACKGROUND

A THEATRICALY INNOVATIVE EXPLORATION OF CULTURAL MYTHS AND TABOOS THAT REINFORCE SEX ROLE DIVISIONS.

Excerpts from a talk given at a Women Studies Seminar, August 1980, given by two Fools Gallery Theatre Company members, Jo Flemming and Inge Kral.

Our theatre has its origins in the work of the Russian director Constantin Stanislavski who lived earlier this century. He believed that the actor must have a total understanding of the character and be totally involved with the play — a rare concept in traditional theatre. The actor should draw emotional sources for their character from their own personal experiences, the actor is thus an observer throughout his/her whole life. Even though our theatre work has its base in Stanislavski we are very different in other ways.

We use a workshop process which demands a lot of time to gain an emotional as well as intellectual understanding of the play or role, in comparison most conventional theatre companies may use only a three to five week rehearsal period. It is our belief that this is not effective theatre, we are trying to get right away from these more superficial styles of theatre.

Our work process involves research, discussion, workshops and performance. We do not wait for the Director to hand out scripts and order us around. The script and action of the play have both evolved through research and workshop. The structure of a workshop usually involves starting from a neutral base, like a relaxation, then the Director will feed in information and we work either alone or together. Workshops are usually either abstractions or experiential. Workshops usually last from three to five hours, however we have also done eighteen hour workshops or a three-day workshop. The three day workshop was a purely experiential recreation of a pioneer community, the characters were four wives, four husbands and two prostitutes. We lived the same roles and within each twenty-four hour we experienced many days and nights — not much sleep was had. It was an artificial situation but the experiences became so real they could not be called superficial. The experience proved very fruitful for our work, a lot of ideas and writing resulted, it has been very important in shaping our work on sexism.

IMAGES FROM THE BACKGROUND

Fools Gallery began working on a full time basis in March 1979. Last year we produced our own adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland*. However our real work has always centred on sexism. This began hazily with the part time Fools Gallery group who in 1977 worked on a production of Ted Hughes' adaptation of *Oedipus* which did not eventuate. The company at present is comprised of a director, Carol Woodrow; artist, July Wood; and seven actors, five females and two males.

The result of all this work is our next production *Images from the Background*, which is made up of four separate performance pieces, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), Sleeping Beauty, Original Sin, Be-ing.

The first part of this year was spent reading widely and gathering research notes for workshop. Two of the main catalysts for the shows have been Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* and Andrea Dworkin's *Woman Hating*. These two books threw us into many areas of research. We began exploring gynocidal atrocities like witch burning and Chinese footbinding — these inspired SOP; and fairy tales which provided the basis for the show Sleeping Beauty. The areas explored most thoroughly in workshop were fairytales, witchburning and religion.

In June we went on a week long working camp where the ideas for the four shows of *Images From the Background* were formulated. Because we had so much information we wanted to express theatrically we decided on the concept of four individual shows completing the whole *Images from the Background*.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

The first show we are performing is Standard Operating Procedure, the name came from a quote in S. Brownmiller's *Against Our Will*, where a Vietnamese veteran, said rape in war was "pretty much standard operating procedure" This title is used because it is very relevant to all the assumptions used to justify centuries of gynocidal atrocities. SOP is quite macabre. It looks at Chinese footbinding, witchhunting, widow and bride burning in India and at rape today, this show tries to understand why women have been subjected to such atrocities, why there has been this unquestioned assumption which still prevails today.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Sleeping Beauty the second show. It follows a fairy tale structure intertwining the story lines of Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella and Snow White. Within this structure we will look at 'romantic love', relationships between males and females and between parents and children. Sleeping Beauty will explode the naively simplistic role models which are reproduced all around us in literature, in advertising, in pornography and in our activities.



ORIGINAL SIN

Original Sin starts with the Adam and Eve myth and the picking of the fruit off the tree of knowledge and subsequently the burden of evil that woman has borne since, all the evil connotations that christianity has put on women and the "Damned Whore God's Police", good women / bad women split. The conclusion to Original Sin is the fall into freedom, the positive reversal of the Adam and Eve myth.

BE-ING

Be-ing is our opportunity as performers to brush away the pain and anger, of the other three shows and present to the audience ourselves, as human beings attempting to conquer the limitations of being women and men. As Monique Witting says in *Les Guerilleres* "there was a time when you were not a slave, remember that . . . you say you have lost all recollection of it, remember . . . you say there are no words to describe this time, you say it does not exist. But remember, make an effort to remember. Or failing that, invent."

After a year and a half's work and research we can now quite rapidly glean performance images from workshop and put four shows together in a relatively short period of time. SOP will open on September 25 at Reid House and perform for two weeks during which time we will simultaneously be scripting and work shopping Sleeping Beauty and Original Sin, which will follow subsequently. We will most likely not be performing Be-ing in Canberra but hope to return with all four shows complete for a short season next year. Our Canberra season will run until early December.

Next year we will be touring *Images from the Background*, in January we hope to be included in the Festival of Sydney and we'll stay on through February also. After Sydney we hope to perform in Melbourne for a couple of months.

ABORTION

a.c.t.

A basic demand of the Women's Movement is the demand for women's autonomy. This includes the right to make informed decisions about our fertility and childbirth. Legalised abortion and free safe contraception are necessary prerequisites for women's autonomy and synonymous with control over our bodies.

Abortion, more so than many other demands of the Women's Movement, is an emotional and morally contentious issue. It also has political ramifications beyond an individual woman's actions. It is for these reasons that it is necessary to have vocal and cohesive abortion action groups, and also for individual women to make themselves familiar with all the arguments, and decide for themselves where they stand.

Contrary to some people's views, the women's movement is not asserting that all women should have abortions, or that an abortion is a pleasant experience. What the movement is saying is that free, safe, abortion on demand **MUST** be available for all women who require it — especially in view of the fact that current contraceptive technology is at best faulty and to some degree harmful to the user. Regardless of the legalities involved, abortions will always be performed, for women's sake they should be as safe and accessible as possible.

The situation in the ACT at present is that there is no independent abortion clinic for Canberra women. Women seeking abortions usually contact the Abortion Counselling Service: 47 8070 at the Women's Centre, 3 Lobelia Street, O'Connor.

There are two ways to obtain an abortion in the ACT —

1. Sydney: If you go to Sydney this entails —
 - pay travelling expenses; train \$16 (doctors advise against train travel after an abortion), bus \$32, or airfare \$73.
 - doctor's referral \$10.50
 - medical procedure i.e. abortion \$120
 - you will probably have to pay one night's accommodation \$30.40.
 - laboratory expenses \$24

2. Canberra: (If you haven't got about \$400 to spare forget it!) If you choose to have an abortion in the ACT you must —

— see your doctor for a referral and she will write a letter to the Terminations Committee — \$10.50

— see a gynaecologist who must write to the Terminations Committee. As there are no salaried gynaecologists resident in public hospitals this is going to cost you about \$51.

— take yourself to the Terminations Committee which will decide whether or not you can proceed.

— If you get past them, go to the ACT hospital where the procedure will be carried out! The gynaecologist will probably insist on a private ward, so on top of the cost of the anaesthetist, the theatre and the operation you will probably have to pay private ward expenses as well. This will all add up to about \$400.

The 'right to choose' is the preserve enjoyed by the few who have sufficient finance and time to utilize the expensive resources available, e.g. airfares to Sydney, private gynaecologists, private hospitals and childcare.

There are many things you can do if you wish to become involved in the abortion issue in Canberra, or on an

national level.

1. Contact AAC, or attend meetings
2. Write letters to your Senate and Reps. members and lobby any appropriate public service Departments (Social Security, Health, etc.).
3. Invite speakers to your workplace or social groups.
4. Make contact with W.O.C. through the Students' Association Office or the Women's Room in the Union Building.
5. Send donations to abortion campaigns in the ACT or interstate.
6. Write letters of support to abortion groups in other countries, particularly those with repressive religious doctrines or governments.

Abortion Action Campaign is concerned with fighting to establish a clinic, but also has other campaigns, such as an expose of individual politicians' views on abortion, and stalls, speakers and rallies. AAC meets every Monday night at the Health Promotions Centre (behind the All-night Chemist) in Childers Street, at 7.30 pm. For more info. contact Penny Green

48 3876 (w) 49 7973 (h)

Abortion is a woman's right to choose.

u.k. — corrie bill

The Bill was defeated after four full days of debate in Parliament in February and March. On 5th February the Campaign against the Corrie Bill held a mass rally and lobby of Parliament. 20,000 people attended, including members of the Women's Movement, trade union and student movements. Many stood for hours in the rain waiting to see their MPs, while speakers got rousing applause in the rally. Many MPs were impressed by the turnout and the organisation of events. It was said that few issues have caused so much public response. Media coverage of both sides of the issue has been extensive and reports of polls taken indicate that the overwhelming majority of Britons support a woman's right to choose.

On February 8th the petition or-

ganised by the National Abortion Campaign was handed to Parliament with over 200,000 signatures and NAC held a Women's Assembly. Three thousand women attended and there were speakers, music and theatre. At the same time as the Assembly, Parliament began the debate on the Corrie Bill. Several women stood up in the visitors' gallery and held up a banner which said 'Women Will Defy Your Law'. Because these women were detained in the Parliament, many women in the Assembly went over to was a strong, noisy women's torch-light demonstration and letters of protest against the Bill were handed in to all the major newspapers.

A month later, on its fourth day of debate, the Bill fell. We had barely begun to celebrate when we heard that a new Bill had been introduced to lower the legal time limit for abortion. Parliament, however, was tired of discussing abortion (thanks to us!) and voted unanimously not to debate the Bill.

NAC would like to thank our sisters in every country who sent so many letters and telegrams of support, but special thanks to Holland where several demonstrations were held and a petition was organized.

The NAC national conference is in May. We will be discussing campaigning for better abortion facilities, improvements in the law, taking the campaign into schools with a video-film/schools kit, working with trade unions, and how we can fight against dangerous contraception. Because so many women from other countries depend on British abortion facilities, we will be discussing a campaign to change the legal regulations so that information about non-profit-making clinics can be made available abroad. What is most important, however, is that having won a decisive victory against all odds by mobilising mass support, NAC is now in a position to fight

peru

The Peruvian government has recently closed down all state contraceptive services in response to pressure from the Catholic Church. This move ensures that only wealthy women, who

can afford private medical consultations, will have access to contraceptives.

ALIMUPER, Action for the Liberation of the Peruvian Women, calls this move "an infringement of the rights of Peruvian women who are victims, once again, of masculine power." They say the suspended services were "strictly voluntary and low cost", and that they were funded by the United Nations.

There are over 85,000 abortions a year and many of the women who have them end up in the hospital with complications. This situation can only get worse if services are not restored.

ALIMPUR is calling for protests against this restrictive measure be sent to President Francisco Morales Bermudez, Palacia de Gobierno, Plaza de Armas, Lima, Peru.

mexico

Abortion is illegal in Mexico, but more than a million abortions were performed there last year, according to a report by Mexico City's police medical advisor. This is a 40% increase on 1978. He condemned "unscrupulous doctors" working in private clinics who supplement their incomes by doing back-street abortions and falsify medical certificates when women die, and he urged increased vigilance by the authorities to prevent these malpractices. He says he is against legalising abortion because it "goes against human dignity".

brazil

In Brazil where abortion is also illegal, a recent study by a Sao Paulo doctor shows that around 3.4 million abortions are carried out every year. It estimates that about a quarter of all Brazilian women of child-bearing age get pregnant once a year, and half of these seek abortions (for most women contraception is not easily available). Some 600,000 women end up in hospitals every year suffering from infections as a result of unhygienic abortions.



thailand

Massage abortion is a little known and widely used method of pregnancy termination in South East Asia. Here Tongplaw Narkavonkit, a sociologist, reports on her two-year study of rural village abortionists in Thailand which shows the importance of this technique in dealing with unwanted pregnancies.

Illegal abortion probably represents the main method of fertility regulation in rural Thailand. An estimated 600 village abortion practitioners are now thought to be carrying out over 300,000 pregnancy terminations each year, representing abortion to live birth ratio of around 250 per 1,000 live births. Eight-one rural abortionists interviewed in a two-year study carried out for the National Family Planning Program have yielded a wealth of information both on the techniques used and the attitudes of Thai women who seek abortion.

Abortion is legal in Thailand only in cases where the mother's life or health is severely threatened or in cases of rape or incest and only with the consent of two doctors. Legal abortions through the Ministry of Public Health's 89 hospitals numbered 1,200 in 1976. But study of 3,530 cases of septic, incomplete or threaten-

ed abortions at one Bangkok hospital points to high incidence of illegal practice.

Family planning services are not yet available widely in much of rural Thailand — a family planning program has only so far reached 155 out of 565 districts — and abortion is the traditional solution to an unwanted pregnancy.

Most village stores have herbal remedies for bringing on a period though it is doubtful that these work; the injection of substances like saline, Dettol, gasoline and glucose into the womb is used by some abortionists, but the most surprising finding of the study was the dominant role that

massage abortion plays in Thailand. Fully 80 per cent of abortions are estimated to be performed by this technique, which, while practised widely in Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, is unknown outside South East Asia.

Twenty-one year old Chun is a typical Thai village abortionist who took over this role from her mother when she died. Each of her clients — she usually sees about seven each month — lies on her back on the floor with her legs spread apart and a pillow or rolled cloth is placed under her back to raise the lower abdomen. Chun locates the fetal mass using external palpation and raises the uterus by pushing with her bare heel just below the pubic bone.

The mass is dislodged by a pressing and pulling motion of the fingertips from the pubic bone to the navel, and the area of the abdomen above the embryo is then massaged with the thumb or base of the palm. The whole procedure may extend over 20-30 minutes or more since Chun will pause if the client complains of intolerable pain; if necessary the procedure is repeated the next day. When bleeding begins the woman is instructed to return home and the fetus will be delivered in 2-10 days.

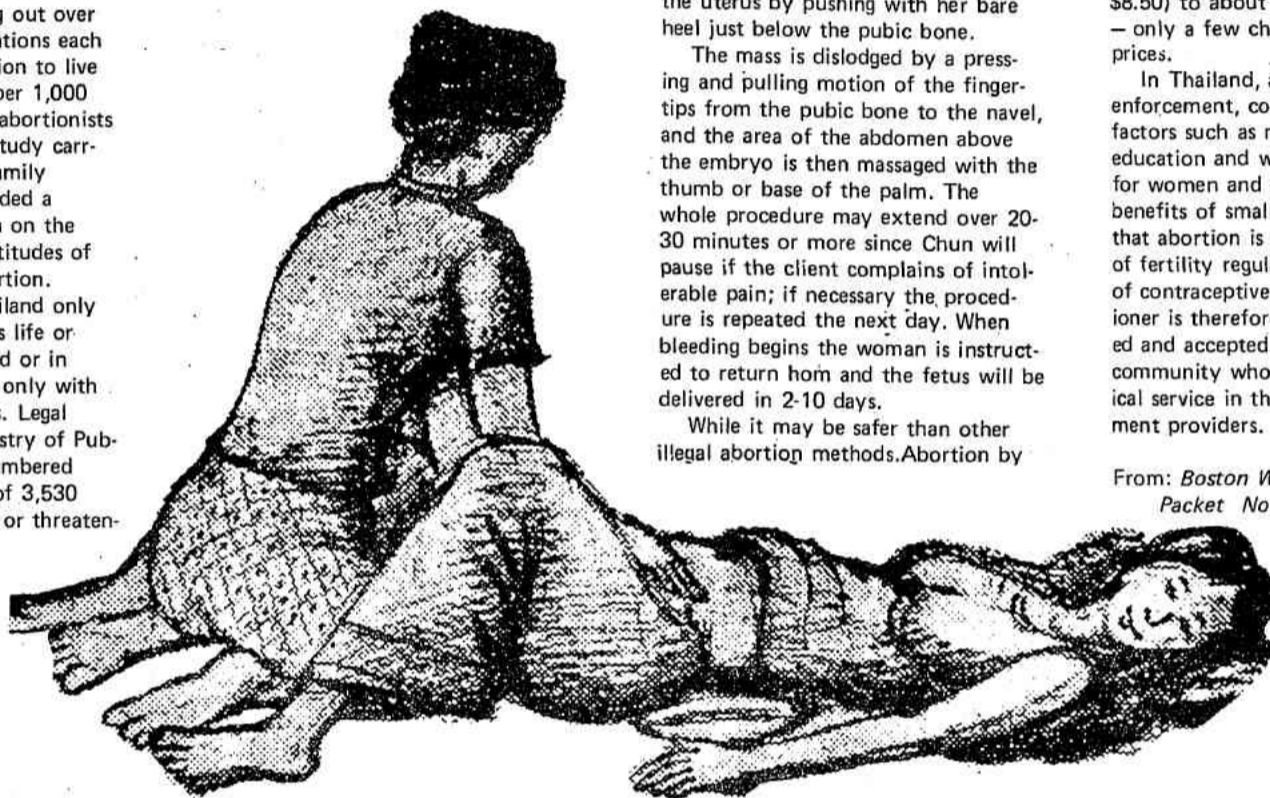
While it may be safer than other illegal abortion methods, abortion by

massage can cause severe bleeding and pelvic infections are not uncommon. Other complications include peritonitis, rupture of the intestines, and internal bleeding; death and sterility can result.

The Thai caseloads are very mixed, with both single and married women and a whole range of occupations, from farmers to students and civil servants. Most abortions are carried out in the first trimester, although it is occasionally carried out as late as seven or eight months and is sometimes performed even before a period is missed as a method of menstrual regulation. Rural abortionists charge from a minimum of 170 baht (US \$8.50) to about 660 baht (US \$30) — only a few charge very exploitive prices.

In Thailand, a remoteness from law enforcement, coupled with social factors such as more or less equal education and work opportunities for women and an acceptance of the benefits of smaller families, means that abortion is an acceptable form of fertility regulation in the absence of contraceptive services. Its practitioner is therefore seen as an established and accepted member of the local community who offers a needed medical service in the absence of government providers.

From: *Boston Women's Health Packet No. 23.*



RAPE CONFERENCE

The National Conference on Rape was held in Hobart from the 28th to 30th of May.

The keynote speech, 'Michigan Sexual Assault Law; an Evaluation' delivered by Dr Virginia Nordby of the University of Michigan outlined successful reforms brought about through the work of the Michigan Law Reform Commission dealing specifically with laws affecting forcible sexual assaults. According to Dr Nordby, the certainty of punishment is the most significant and deterrent. This, of course, is highly dubious. Nevertheless, reforms dealing with degrees of sexual assault, forced consent, statutory rape, rape within marriage, the requiring of prior sexual activity as evidence, etc., will give women more legal rights.

Motions were passed calling for the recognition of rape within marriage, for no mention to be made at the trial as to how long the victim took to report the sexual assault and for judges to be wary of convicting on the victim's evidence alone and for there to be no cross-examination of victims about their previous sexual history etc. These motions were quite enlightened motions paving the way for adequate reform of the existing archaic laws.

The establishment and funding of

both sexual assault referral centres in hospitals and autonomous rape crisis centres was supported by the conference, so that "victims of sexual offences may be adequately and sensitively cared for in a centre of their choice".

Another proposal, which has caused heated debate overseas, called for the grading of offences for sexual assault into varying degrees of seriousness, rather than one single category of rape.

There was no agreement as to what constitutes rape due to the diversity of opinions on this. Hence there was no motion formulated which outlined the conference's 'definition' of rape.

We can only hope that the recommended reforms of the National Conference in Hobart are acted upon by State Governments.

However, while these reforms should be raised and supported, only widespread changes in attitudes to women and their role in society will do much to lessen sexual harassment of women.

Several days after the conference two elderly women in Hobart, one aged 90 and the other in her 70s were raped! **RAPE IS ABOUT POWER NOT SEX!**

"FORUM"

ANTI-FEMINIST ATTACKS

The March, 1980 edition of *Forum* ran a feature article of "Abortion Services in NSW". The article claims to have looked at "the type of abortion services available in Sydney, the differing policies, politics and standards of care." But was that in fact the real intention of the article? The article was compiled by Bettina Arndt who is a member of Preterm's Board. (Preterm is a non-profit abortion clinic.)

The article concludes that "clinics such as Preterm and PSI and private practitioners who have been in the business a long time are probably the safest places to go for an abortion." (p.11).

What does this statement imply for the feminist clinics in Sydney? The article goes on to say that "of 17 New Zealand women sent to PSI over a five month period not one experienced complications. (Yet) of 32 women who went to smaller clinics, 18 experienced complications and two women required hospitalisation". This is a clear accusation of negligence on the part of the smaller clinics. The overall sentiment of the articles was to boost the status of PSI and Preterm and to criticise the feminist clinics, this being a very opport-

une time for these organisations to discredit the feminist clinics.

The article also criticises 'Control', the feminist abortion referral agency for not referring women to Preterm or PSI. Arndt cynically claims that Control regards politics "as more important than standards of care".



WOMEN OF THE WORLD

money for courses such as stenography, typing or sewing. Thus, during their so-called free time the women are further exploited by throat-cutting institutions. They harbour the illusion that with a bit of education they will go further and improve their lives.

But some women have come to another conclusion. They define themselves as women who, because they do not have the opportunity for self improvement, belong to the most exploited sector of society. However, this exploitation is not strong enough to break their will to rebel against the miserable living conditions. These women, who meet every two weeks on their day off, are, as they express it, fighting "for human dignity", so that they no longer "have to be treated worse than animals".

The goal of these women is the establishment of a union in order to defend their rights. Their demands are clear: 1) regulated working hours (10 hours per day), 2) a minimum wage (about \$42/month), 3) health insurance 4) protection of rights; and 5) living quarters away from the work place. One of the biggest problems within the organization appears to be lack of publicity. Because of their isolation and separation within the family, it is almost impossible to acquire a large number of women. Contacts are usually made through friendship with other maids. It's not possible to reach each other by phone since they fear the repression of the family. Moreover, the group of *chicas* works independent of political parties. In spite of everything, they have managed to contact women in other cities and to send women to various congresses in order to drum up some publicity for their work.

ISIS International Bulletin

HOW THEY GOT MARTINA

This year at Wimbledon the crowd were heavily influenced by a blatant media campaign against Martina Navratilova. To everyone's 'horror' the news was broken that Martina the 1978/9 champion was a lesbian. Not only that but she was living with Rita Mae Brown! The press and crowds became obsessed with this fact, speculating over all aspects of her personal life and how these may affect her tennis.

So-called "normal" women, i.e. those married, like Chris Evert-Lloyd and Evonne Cawley and the press-named "teenage sex symbol" Tracy Austin, were feted. Other women players were accused of "neurotic behaviour", being "prune faced" and being "lesbians". It was easy to see on TV how much the crowds attitude affected Navratilova.

The Sun-Herald wrote — "it was to everyone's delight when two of the most popular and attractive girl players — Mrs Evonne Cawley and Mrs Chrissie Lloyd-Evert made to the Final. Both of them are happily married". One can't detract from Evonne's win however, as she played excellent tennis, and in view of the discrimination against Aboriginal women, has had to fight hard for this success.

Sources: Age/Herald/Sun/Sydney WL Newsletter for Sun-Herald quote.



WORONI 8-9-80 Page 20

DANISH WOMEN'S VICTORY

Lene Knudsen reports from Denmark on an important feminist victory:
Spare Rib

There is an old house in Copenhagen, built for poor women by King Frederick's mistress, the Countess Danner. The house was for women only, and after her death a foundation was established to ensure that the house would be used according to the countess's wishes. This foundation was administered by the Ministry of Justice.

Last autumn the house was sold to a firm of builders, to be an office building. The women's movement went to the house one night and stayed. They wanted it for a crisis centre for battered women — there were no such centres in Denmark. The building firm didn't have the nerve to get the police to throw the women out. Instead they offered to sell the house to the women, without making a profit. The women thought this unfair; the house was theirs according to the foundation, so why pay for it? But the ministry approved of the sale, so the women had to find the money. A national collection was established, which got lots of support and money — but not enough money.

However, the women now had full support from the whole press, from two thirds of the members of parliament, and from masses of women and men. People donated money if they could afford it, or lived in the house trying to help out. Old women would come and donate part of their pension. It was a fantastic experience.

When the first payment had to be made, money started showing up from local councils, even the government made a small donation. One of the really big petrol companies run by a woman made a massive donation. And so all the money was there.

Now we've got a house in Copenhagen for women subjected to violence, and centres like this are starting all over the country.



ANS/Granma



ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Things don't look good for women in the US right now, but they're going to look worse if Ronald Reagan gets to be President of the United States. His image of the down-to-earth, 'think of the facts', good-looking man has been kneaded and shaped to cover his true aspirations. He is a dangerous man. Scratch the easy home-spun charm and you find a rock-hard conservative and cold-war advocate who could throw the world into a period of instability.

Reagan, a Republican, is ahead of Jimmy Carter in the Presidency Polls. Twice before Reagan has run for the Presidency only to be rejected outright because of his dangerous, and dangerously-simple 'solutions' to the complex problems of modern capitalism. Reagan hasn't changed, but America and the needs of the capitalist class have.

Carter's failure to restore economic stability has necessitated the search for a better 'manager' of Capital. People are looking to Reagan for the answer.

Reagan is part of the Cold War push which is being used to move the focus away from the internal problems facing the US. Reagan tells the crowds that they are in greater danger now than they were the morning after Pearl Harbour, 1941. Then he puts his solution "No more Vietnams, No more Irans. Never again will we fight with one hand behind our backs". Reagan will bring back many of the weapons cancelled by Carter, e.g. the Neutron Bomb.

His 'solutions' to the problems caused by Carter's economic policies include:

- * Reducing the number of civil servants.
- * Getting the 'scroungers' off welfare,
- * Taking the Government out of the business arena in a return to a free market,
- * Taking heed of Margaret Thatcher's policies.

The implications of these economic policies are enormous. It is women who will suffer most if Reagan cuts the welfare budget. It is women who will suffer if Reagan pushes even further towards a free market economy where spending in the public sector is reduced. Reagan's support for Thatcher's policies shows his anti-woman, anti-working class tendencies and the extent of his policies.

The fact that Reagan is running at all shows the need for Capital to use repressive 'law and order' tactics and

policies to control the economy and the working class. Part of this campaign is to push women back into their traditional roles and consequently out of the workforce. Women in Australia must learn from the political climate in the US and be prepared and beware for such a movement in Australia.

Barbara.

A former President, Mr Ford, honorary leader of the Republican Party, came into conflict yesterday with the declared aims of the party's prospective presidential candidate, Mr Reagan.

On Wednesday, at the urging of pro-Reagan conservatives, the Republican Party amended its campaign policy platform to withdraw Republican support for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equal rights for women.

Yesterday just as the Republicans were trying to mount a show of unity for tomorrow's presidential nomination convention, Mr Ford said he was much opposed to the party withdrawing support for the amendment. His wife, Betty, also expressed disappointment. She said she would continue working for the ratification of a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equal rights for women.

Reprinted from Canberra Times, 14.7.80.

THE WIMMINS CENTRE

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Phone 47 8070 Open from 10-6
Weekdays.

A place where wimmin can come and relax over a cup of tea, research, read or escape from the world . . .

The Women's Centre houses:

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Feminist Bookshop.

You can also get information from various collectives on Wimmings & Unemployment, Lesbianism, Wimmings Health & Legal Services and 'Rouge' is on sale there.

ALL WIMMIN WELCOME

WOMEN OF THE WORLD

WOMEN WORK TWICE AS HARD AS MEN

Women and girls make up half the world's population, put in two-thirds of the world's working hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income, own less than one-hundredth of the world's property.

WOMEN ON CHICKEN STRIKE

Mississippi: 200 strikers, nearly all women, most of whom are black have been on strike at Sanderson's Farms, a chicken processing plant for 15 months. Their strike pay has dropped from \$35 to \$15 a week but they are determined to continue fighting. The women were expected to cut up five chickens per minute and become covered in feathers and blood, developing allergic rashes on their arms and necks, plus being cut by unguarded circular saws and blunt knives. They were not allowed to leave the line to have cuts attended and were given only three toilet visits per week.

On days when there were more than 180,000 chickens delivered, overtime was compulsory and the women were never told in advance that they would have to stay back. Anyone who left before the last chicken or anyone six minutes late, were counted absent for the whole day. Three absences, even for sickness, in 60 days and a woman was fired.

In 1972 the women formed Local 882 of the International Chemical Workers Union. They make \$2.95 an hour — up to \$3.20 after 12 years. Sanderson (a member of the Ku Klux Klan) has tried to break the Union by firing or transferring union members. The usual sexual harassment was also escalated for union women. The strikers made what seems to be minimal demands — guards on saws, knives sharpened, the right to see a doctor when injured, workers' compensation



insurance and no sexual harassment. They also want toilet breaks, some negotiating rights on the speed of the line, and the right to take holidays. The company has refused to recognise the union and has been charged by National Labor Relations Board with violating health and safety and child labor laws. Sanderson has been bringing in scab labour since the strike began. The AFL-CIO has called for a boycott of "Miss Goldy" and "Southern Beauty" chickens and the Union, ICWU, sees it as a fight for the soul of the union. Mississippi is one of the US "right to work" states — a right wing, anti-union stance.

20,000 demonstrators have come to the town in support of the strikers, including feminist groups and in Washington, a group called Union Sister Productions held a benefit for the strike with the presentation of a one woman show about nuclear power worker, Karen Silkwood, killed (murdered?) on her way to testify about a health and safety conspiracy of McGee Kerr, nuclear power plant operators. Source: Off Our Backs, May 1980.

NICARAGUAN WOMEN

The following information is extracted from an article in Tribune and outlines the struggle of women in Nicaragua.

In 1977 as the issue of political prisoners became severe, women began to organise for human rights. In the country, especially in the north, women were organising to denounce the repression in the concentration camps, the mass murder of peasants and the rape of peasant women.

A group of women formed the autonomous association of Women Confronting the National Problems (AMPRONAC) and by the end of the war women were organising the whole population.

After the unsuccessful insurrection of September, 1978, AMPRONAC joined the United People's Movement and began to participate in the neighbourhood committees. They established clandestine dispensaries and accumulated medical supplies and explosive materials. AMPRONAC was one of the prime movers of the civil defence committees which organised block by block the people who stayed on to fight. These became the seeds of today's Andinista Defence Committee.

Hundreds of women were organised into combat units with the women taking leadership roles both politically and militarily. In the entire armed forces, about 30% are women — about half fighters and half in charge of political and organisational tasks.

After the war AMPRONAC changed its name to the Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMN). Its goals were to ensure that women's needs are met by encouraging women to actively participate in the reconstruction. The objective conditions of their economy and the fact that the family is more often than not the necessary condition for survival has meant that the women have concentrated more on the general economic and legal situation of women than on a critical analysis of women's places within the church or the family.

After the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in 1979, Nicaragua's economy was left completely destroyed. The women see their most urgent task as the establishment of industrial and agricultural production. This has caused the tremendous unemployment rate which has prevented the vast majority of women getting paid jobs. The 1980 jobs creation plan is supposed to provide many women with jobs, but it is painfully obvious that the material means to implement such programs do not exist.

The women who participated in the revolution in an active and autonomous way through AMPRONAC no longer see their roles as domestic. They see the importance of dealing with sexism and "machismo" in terms of consolidation of the revolution. This consciousness however, tends to remain limited to the active women and the revolutionary movement.

SOVIET UNION

FEMINIST LEADERS EXPELLED VIENNA, Monday

Three Leningrad feminist movement leaders, including Mrs Tatiana Mamonova, 32, who have all been deprived of their Soviet citizenship and expelled from the Soviet Union, arrived in Vienna yesterday on a regular Austrian airline flight.

The other two are Mrs Natalia Malakowskaja and Mrs Tatiana Gorrichjeva, both 32. All three were editors

of clandestine *Samizdat* feminist publications.

Mrs Mamonova was the editor-in-chief of the magazine *The Woman in the USSR*, the first edition of which was seized soon after it appeared in December 1979.

Mrs Malakowkaja and Mrs Gorrichjeva were editors-in-chief of the feminist magazine *Maria*, whose two editions appeared in Leningrad without, up until now, being seized.

The three said that they want to continue their activities in exile.

Reprinted from *The Canberra Times* 22 July 1980.



COLUMBIAN MAIDS: ripped off

In Colombia in 1973 over half of all working women were employed in the service sector. Of these, three fourths are hired as domestics. They are called chicas de servicio or muchachas. Almost all of them come from the countryside. A few of them have been meeting regularly for half a year to put an end to the kind of treatment they suffer.

A women's movement, as we know it in the US, does not exist in Colombia. Women's organizations have formed within the various political parties — bourgeois and leftist — but rarely do specific women's issues or activities become public. While the women of the middle class mainly occupy themselves with charity events and the like, the women of the left join strikes against companies that hire mainly women. Besides those groups, there exists a diversified range of independent women's groups which concern themselves with such problems as self-experience, the role of women within traditional Colombian literature, or sociological and psychological reflections on the situation of Colombian women in the family and in the area of work outside of the household.

In December 1978 a national Women's Congress took place in the town of Medellin. Nineteen women's groups showed up to discuss for the first time the oppression of women within the context of Colombian history. The women agreed upon certain basic themes: sexuality and reproductive rights, the class struggle, parties and the liberation of women.

More concrete, however, are the struggles which directly confront the situation of women in the work place. The strike of 1976 at Vanitex, a textile factory in which mostly women are employed, indicated that women have decided to fight together against the inhuman work conditions and the low wages (\$1.50/day). *We know that the company earns millions. In only one work hour each one of us produces what we earn in a week. The company began in 1955 with \$56 million and today has more than \$500. . . And who made that? We workers.*

Life for women in the rural areas, especially if they are farm workers, is often hard. Selling coffee and vegetables generally brings in only a little money, and rarely is the money available for their own use.

Even more gruesome and brutal, however, is the struggle to survive for the women who move from the country to the city. In 1964, 40% of all migrant women were between the ages of 15 and 19. They come to the city hoping to find a better life. If they're lucky they may become street merchants, garbage collectors, prostitutes or maids. The *chicas des servicio*, constitute an integral part of the Colombian middle class household. Only around 10% of all women in Colombia are employed, half of them work in the service sector, a majority of those are domestics. About 30 *chicas* from Bogota have been regularly meeting with each other for over two years in order to discuss their economic and personal situation and to find means of organization and operation. They share a common background and plight.

This fundamental bondage to the work place makes a slave out of the woman. Regulated times for work and leisure are unknown to a maid. Usually her work day begins around 5-5.30 am and goes into the late night hours; she works up to 19 hours daily, at times without a break. She does everything from cooking to serving, housecleaning to child caring. She must even wash the family's laundry by hand.

What the women are especially rebelling against is the inhuman treatment they experience at the hands of many families. For the mistress of the home, they are no more than a machine; for the sons and husbands they are mere sex objects. A pregnant maid is considered as useless as a sick one. In both cases she is usually thrown out in the street. Social security is not available, although on paper she is legally protected. (There are laws regulating work time, vacations, sick leave, etc.) However, the employer pays little attention to these stipulations and the maids are generally unaware of their rights. Usually they have no medical benefits, no unemployment insurance, and no retirement plan.

A maid can work for a family until she dies — during her last years she receives free room and board without salary since she is no longer 'capable' of working. Or she can end up on the street as a prostitute or beggar.

The lack of education is a major problem for these women. Most of those that come from the country cannot read nor write. Some have had at the most two years of elementary education.

The social norms set by employers are seldom questioned. The extreme fear of a father authority common to Colombian culture is transferred to the employer. The women have on the average one day off every two weeks, and must work on all holidays. Since most of the houses are located outside the city center, the women have little opportunity to ever leave their restricted work areas, making it nearly impossible for them to meet people. In order to compensate for their feelings of social inferiority, a few sacrifice their free time and their



WOMEN—EXPLOITED WORKERS

WOMEN WORKERS IN S.E. ASIA

"We hire girls because they are easier to control"

The question of industrialisation in S.E. Asia and the closer integration of the economies of the Asia/Pacific region is a crucial one for Australian workers. Here we shall consider the position of women workers in S.E. Asia in the context of the pattern of industrialisation occurring there.

THE SEMI-CONDUCTOR INDUSTRY

The semi-conductor industry produces the components for the 'micro-process or revolution'. The industry has developed a highly internationally specialised production process. The lightweight, microscopic components it manufactures have enabled the industry to air-freight parts back and forth across the Pacific to use Asia's low wage workers for the most labour intensive steps in the process. The industry has thus developed production workers who are almost all female both in the US and Asia.

An examination of the industry in S.E. Asia shows the links between the



conventional ways multinational corporations the Third World and new forms of domination based on the sexual division of labour.

On the island of Penang, Malaysia, approximately 19,000 women work in electronics factories. In all between 200,000 and 300,000 women work in electronics plants throughout S.E. Asia. Women are the industry's choice of workers because their economic weakness and social subordination makes them easier to control than men.

Because they must keep productivity high and costs low to be competitive, semi-conductor firms have put a great deal of effort into developing a whole battery of methods to control and manipulate women who work in their plants. Their personnel policies combine authoritarian discipline with the most sophisticated human relations techniques. These techniques exploit the traditionally defined attitudes of femininity, passivity, submissiveness, and sexual desirability, while creating a factory lifestyle distinct from that of the general society. Their purpose is to make women workers more immediately productive and to inculcate into them a long term sense of identity with the company. At the same time the emphasis on passive and ornamental femininity is intended to forestall the rise of any sense of independence or unified strength among the women workers.

One technique used is 'recreation' — beauty contests and other competit-

ions, sewing classes, classes in the use of cosmetics, company publications with an endless stream of images of women as sex objects and passive providers. These activities have a dual purpose — to encourage competitiveness and to induct women into the use of commodities so they will work harder to acquire them.

There are also production competitions, billed as 'fun', but which barely mask speed-ups and provide the rationale for increasing quotas.

On the other hand, there is strict control and discipline — workers are assigned quotas and monitored by daily productivity charts. They are prohibited from talking on the shop floor and they must wear uniforms.

'What we are doing here resembles a family system in which I am not just the manager but also a father to all of those here in Fairchild. This conforms to a very important Indonesian principle, that of the family.'

The women are bombarded with propaganda and slogans portraying the factory as a family. This stress on family ideology is designed to prevent them recognising the implications of their own independence from their families. At the same time the family analogy legitimates the combination of authoritarian discipline and indulgence which

management uses to keep workers in line.

With these policies it is hoped to preclude any moves by workers to organise themselves.

'Intil doesn't believe in unions. We believe in finding out what workers want. We conduct twice yearly attitude surveys with workers.'

One semi-conductor executive went further, explaining that the industry stresses human relations to prevent unionisation, because it would raise wage costs now and 'rigidify' the size of the workforce in the future. The industry wants to retain its ability to lay off workers if the market slumps or if automation becomes profitable.

In opposing the organisations of workers the electronics companies get much assistance from the policies of the governments concerned and their use of outright repression to put down all forms of worker protest. In wooing foreign investment Asian governments have stressed the availability of large pools of cheap female labour.

Glossy brochures describe the prospect in terms similar to the following from Malaysia — The Solid State for Electronics:

'The manual dexterity of the oriental female is famous the world over. Her hands are small and she works fast with extreme care. Who therefore could be better qualified by nature and inheritance to contribute to the efficiency of a bench-assembly production line than the oriental girl.'

DYING FOR WORK

Laundry workers at the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston, England, were not required by law to be monitored regularly for radioactivity. That is, not until last August, when three women who worked in the laundry showed plutonium contamination of the lungs.

Dangers to the health of working women are only beginning to be documented. The Women and Hazards group (9, Poland St., London W.1.) suggests that the reason it took so long to recognize asbestos as a killer was because it was women in the textile mills who worked with it and statistics on working women were not collected.

JOB GHETTOS

Though approaching 50% of the workforce, most women still work in largely unorganized female job ghettos.

Traditionally, men have held the more obviously dangerous jobs, such as in the mining and construction industries. However, in factories, offices, restaurants, and retail shops, as agricultural, domestic and hospital workers, women risk disease and injury from exposure to noise, dust, fumes, heat, stress, vibration, radiation, and poisonous chemicals. For example, no one suspected that the typists' indispensable correcting fluid could be responsible for headaches, nausea, and fatigue until its major ingredient, trichloroethylene, turned out to be toxic in studies of other chemical solvents.

Further hidden from view are women who work at home doing housework and, taking care of children. In addition to the inevitable back problems and exposure to toxic cleaning chemicals, women washing men's contaminated overalls have been known to contract asbestosis and beryllium poisoning. For women who work a double day, there is double the stress and exhaustion.

SPECIAL DANGERS

Women's reproductive capacity makes us especially vulnerable in the workplace. To the list of 30,000 chemicals in commercial production a thousand are added every year. Only a few hundred have been tested adequately for safety to life, and far fewer for the dangers they present to a fetus or to a woman's fertility. Research in Eastern Europe has shown that pregnant women working in the plastics industry and exposed to formaldehyde are at risk. In Italy, a state

Today many feminists have taken up the struggle which brings us up against many of our traditional enemies. Sexist union leadership which neither recognizes nor represents women's health concerns has spurred independent actions such as the production of information pamphlets about job hazards. The belief that any job is better than none, even if its dangerous, is prevalent in these times of unemployment. Insecurity fosters competitiveness and women have found that a strong presence on health and safety committees helps build trust in organizing around common experiences.

BOSSSES OBSTRUCT

The biggest obstacle, of course, is the employer who will stop at nothing to protect profits. A worker in the occupational health movement explains "it's always cheaper to hire a new worker to replace one who's sick than it is to clean up the workplace so anyone can work safely there."

So-called "protective" legislation in the USA and England is reinforcing a sinister development in industry's response to a growing women's consciousness around workplace safety.

Women are being forced out of jobs, particularly in the petro-chemical, heavy metal manufacturing and laboratory areas where dangers to pregnancy or fertility are known to exist. It began a few years ago at a General Motors lead battery plant in Oshawa, Canada, when women working with lead were given the choice of sterilization or the loss of their jobs. Dow, Esso, and Dupont followed suit in what is clearly an assault on women in "non-female" jobs. No similar "concern" has been expressed for women workers who are exposed daily to countless chemicals, drugs, and diseases since that industry depends on a predominantly female workforce.

Nine women automotive workers in Michigan are suing General Motors and Ford over discrimination against pregnant women who must maintain heavy workloads or be declared medically unfit to work. The women argue that pregnancy should be awarded the same benefits (time off) and workload consideration as other temporary disabilities.

Other workplace strategies include training in spotting hazards and learning to use and develop resources for testing noise and stress levels, chemical contamination and so on.

Consciousness-raising is an integral part of the process as women are beginning to bring a commitment to



commission found that a scandalous 20% of pottery workers had aborted or prematurely given birth. Many birth defects are very probably related to exposure to chemicals, (experts say).

Women have long been active in the fight for a healthy workplace. In 1888, the Matchgirls' Strike in London drew attention to the plight of women (working with white phosphorous) who contracted necrosis, a terrible bone disease.

the improvement of the quality of life into our challenge of the profit-hungry market-lace.

(See: Spare Rib, January '79, "Occupational Hazards to Women" by Anne George, Box 1541 Station B, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5R5, "Women's Work, Women's Health" by Jean Stellman.)

Open Road, Summer 1979.

MIGRANT WOMEN WORKERS

Migrant women workers have been concentrated in jobs with even worse pay and conditions than those of their English speaking counterparts. These are largely in labour intensive manufacturing industries, and cleaning and domestic work. In 1971 (the most recent accurate figures available) they made up 26% of the total female workforce but 42% of the female manufacturing workforce. (IAC, 1974-5.) It is because of the situation of migrants in the workforce that migrant women suffer a double oppression.

Australian capitalism has always relied heavily on immigration. But what was new in the post war migration was its size, and the fact that the majority of migrants were from non-Anglo Saxon backgrounds. The large-scale immigration programme accompanied extensive capital investment and was aimed at providing the necessary labour for the expanding industries, and contributing to the growth of the domestic market.

"We have a spirit of egalitarianism which promotes an exceptional level of social and economic mobility."

(Mackellar, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, June '78)

The publicity material of the Australian government held out to migrants a picture of a promised land: home ownership, excellent education opportunities, plenty of work, good pay, etc. — a smiling friendly open country waiting to receive them. However for those from Southern Europe, and later from the Middle East, the reality did not measure up to the promise. They found themselves shunted from job to job, isolated in hostels and

later in inner city ghettos, faced with a wall of hostility and prejudice and often unable to communicate. They also found themselves allocated to a particular position in the hierarchy of jobs — as low paid, unskilled workers in manufacturing and construction, and in the blue collar sectors of the service industries (as cleaners, road workers, hospital aides, etc.) Thirty years later the situation has not changed much. While some individuals have

moved beyond such jobs the non-English speaking workforce as a whole remains locked into them.

The capitalist production process requires groups of workers that can be subjected to particularly exploitative conditions and can serve as a reserve workforce — to move from one sector to another and in and out of the workforce. It is very convenient when people can be allocated to this position on the basis of their sex or racial/ethnic origin. Then it appears as if the innate 'natural' qualities of these people are the cause of their lowly position. However there is nothing 'natural' about women's position in the labour force. In fact, their vulnerability stems from their oppressed position in the family.

The vulnerability of newly arrived migrants is related to the whole process that has brought them here. In many cases coming to Australia is a transition from a rural peasant society to an industrialised society. The dislocation associated with this process is made worse by the fact that they enter an alien and dominant society. The racism endemic to Anglo-Saxon society takes many forms. They range from outright prejudice to patronising paternalism. But always underlying is the familiar Anglo-Saxon attitude — 'they are different to us, and they are inferior to us, they don't even speak English'. They somehow shouldn't expect or don't need the same standard of living — they are meant to be grateful for being here at all. The fact that migrants once here, fill the least desirable jobs serves to confirm such attitudes.

However, migrants fill these jobs because they have little choice. On arrival, with little or no money, they must take whatever job they can get. Those who are unskilled have little chance of gaining skills after some time in Australia because of language and other barriers. Many migrants who have gained skills and qualifications in their home country find these are not recognised in Australia. Such conditions operate to maintain migrants as a disorganised isolated section of the workforce. This is exacerbated

by their exclusion from active participation in the trade union movement — in large part a consequence of language barriers and the fact that the trade union movement itself has traditionally been of a male Anglo-Saxon orientation.

'We are women workers and most exploited'

Migrant women have experienced these conditions in an even more oppressive form than migrant men. There have been a large number of women among post war migrants. Unlike Western European countries which mainly take single male 'guest workers', Australian capitalism has drawn on family migration, partly as a means to contribute to population growth. Not only have these women been an important source of labour for the most unpleasant 'female jobs', but their need to work is even greater than that of their Anglo-Saxon counterparts. Their husbands are more likely to be in low paying, unskilled jobs and the family is likely to have incurred heavy debts in the process of coming to and settling in the 'lucky country'. Thus the forces operating to draw all women into the workforce have been experienced in an acute form by migrant women.

'Migrant women are like sheep. They are led by their husbands. Because they are loath to make decisions for themselves it is very easy for a man to convince them to do what he wants.'

(Management comment, CURA Report, p. 86.)

The position of migrant women is exacerbated by their family situation. The majority of migrant women workers are young, married, and have young children. The pressures of finding adequate childcare are worse for them because they are more likely to need to work while children are still very young. However, there are few childcare services in Australia for women who work either full-time or shiftwork. Job inflexibility is further increased because migrant men often

fear the effects on their wives and daughters of contact with Australian men and women, and attempt to seclude them even more by insisting they stay in jobs where female migrant labour is dominant. Their chances of learning English are thus even slighter than those of migrant men.

Just as sexist attitudes have been played on in the current economic crisis, so have racist ones. Migrants are blamed for taking Australians jobs. As with women, the extremely high levels of unemployment, particularly for recently arrived migrants, are not taken as seriously as is unemployment for Anglo-Saxon males.

Because of the vulnerability of all workers in Australia, attitudes of hostility towards particular sections of the workforce are being refuelled. Migrants are blamed by other workers for providing a readily available supply of cheap labour that undermines wages levels and union militancy, and for being prepared to work extra hard in their eagerness to earn money. Racism in the working class is a measure of the success of the divide and rule

tactics of the ruling class. Although such attitudes are not the cause of divisions in the workforce, they reinforce them, and contribute to the maintenance of the position of migrant workers.

An investigation of the trends in manufacturing and service sectors will show in greater detail

(i) how divisions in the workforce have been utilised in the restructuring process, and

(ii) the employment/unemployment patterns of different sections of the workforce.

We shall also consider youth unemployment as a particular example of media mystification. And part-time work as an example of the current solutions being offered.

(From: *Women and Unemployment* by Women's Employment Rights Campaign, 1980.)

BREAKTHROUGH IN MALE CONTRACEPTION

The newest development in male contraception was unveiled recently at the American Women's Surgical Symposium held at the Ann Arbor Medical Centre. Dr Sophie Merkin, of the Merkin Clinic, announced the preliminary findings of a study conducted on 763 unsuspecting male undergraduate students at a large midwest university. In her report, Dr Merkin stated that the new contraceptive — the IPD — was a breakthrough in male contraception. It will be marketed under the trade-name "Umbrelly".

The IPD (intra-penile device) resembles a tiny folded umbrella which is inserted through the head of the penis and pushed into the scrotum with a plunger-like instrument. Occasionally there is perforation of the scrotum but this is disregarded since it is known that the male has few nerve endings in this area of his body. The underside of the umbrella contains a spermicidal jelly, hence the name "Umbrelly".

Experiments on 1,000 white whales from the continental shelf (whose sexual apparatus is said to be the closest to

man's) proved the umbrelly to be 100% effective in preventing production of sperm, and eminently satisfactory to the female whale since it does not interfere with her rutting pleasure.

SCROTAL INFECTION

"Only 2 died"

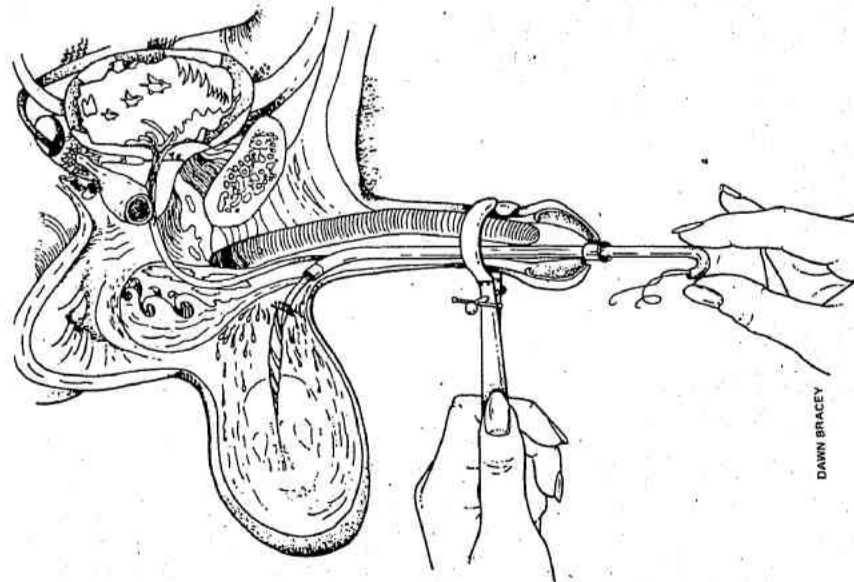
Dr Merkin declared the umbrelly to be statistically safe for the human male. She reported that of the 763 graduate students tested with the device only two died of scrotal infection, only 20 experienced swelling of the tissues. Three developed cancer of the testicles, and 13 were too depressed to have an erection. She stated that common complaints ranged from cramping and bleeding to acute abdominal pain. She emphasised that these symptoms were merely indications that the man's body had not yet adjusted to the device. Hopefully the symptoms would disappear within a year.

One complication caused by the IPD and briefly mentioned by Dr Merkin was the incidence of massive scrotal

infection necessitating the surgical removal of the testicles. "But this is a rare case", said Merkin, "too rare to be statistically important." She and other distinguished members of the Women's College of Surgeons agreed that the

benefits far out-weighed the risk to any individual man.

(reprinted from *East Bay Men's Centre Newsletter and the Periodical Lunch*, Ann Arbor, Michigan.)



Body images

Body images are people's perceptions of their own bodies, responses to an ideal. In our society the body image of the "ideal" woman is a product of patriarchal and capitalist values. Here we have gathered together a number of different ideas regarding women's body images from discussions and reminiscences with feminists.

'The ideal'???

"comfort at any stage is discomfort, and these discoveries never come to an end. Hence the need for greater comfort does not exactly arise within you directly; it is suggested to you by those who hope to make a profit from its creation."

G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, 1820.

The point of this article is to demonstrate the lack of freedom inherent in the absurd, endless pursuit of the 'ideal' body image. The state of unfreedom derives precisely from the contradiction it entails between one's essence and existence; it's a state of untruth. For the woman who pursues the 'ideal' body image presents herself to the world in a form that is imposed on her from the outside — it does not derive from her own essential nature, i.e. *herself*. The result, sadly enough, is the woman conceived as *body* and not as *mind*.

Unfreedom, Untruth and Contradiction.

Basically, all this is created and perpetuated by patriarchal society. The 'ideal' body image serves as a very easy instrument for the oppression of women. Patriarchy and capitalism go hand in hand — just witness the mass production and mass consum-

ption of cosmetics, clothes, etc. to infinity. The capitalist system indeed makes a huge profit by promoting the ideal body image. Every second shop one walks past is a woman's clothes shop! Women frantically rush out to buy the latest fashions, cosmetics, obtain the latest hair style — often regardless of expense. The futility of this pursuit consists in the fact that the ideal body image can never, never be obtained. The capitalist system, in short, supports and enforces the 'ideal' body image.

The story of women's lives is the story of unjustified conditioning. From the time little pink booties are placed on our feet, bang — we're caught in the infinite regress of pursuing the 'ideal' feminine stereotype. Women are manipulated and cajoled into obtaining hour-glass figures, sensuous painted lips, impeccably shaven arms and legs, wearing restrictive bras and high-heeled shoes which ruin the feet and damage the spine!

And how different is this from the old Oriental custom of binding women's feet? Throughout history women are subjugated to varying degrees of physical and psychological torture in order to conform to the 'ideal' body image, the ideal sexual object.

It sickens me that this 'ideal' body image is starving women from true appreciation of their bodies. A distorted conception of themselves is inevitable: when women realise that they can't meet this 'ideal' image their self-esteem is at stake.

Women are perpetuating this 'ideal' body image by fooling themselves into believing that this 'ideal' body image is synonymous with being a woman. It is in men's needs and interest to promote this image of women. In order for men to continue to dominate women they are objectifying women into being sexual objects: sexual slaves.

Women must fight against the very social forces which enforce and perpetuate this image. e.g. mass media, education, family, peers. In short, fight against this patriarchal capitalist society. If not women will continue to be oppressed. They will continue to be brainwashed into believing that the 'ideal' body image is realistic presumption of femininity. For whom are women *really* satisfying in becoming 'plastic moulds'? Are we as women satisfying our needs as strong and independent women or are we satisfying the needs and interests of men? Resist and fight against this 'ideal' body image. Fight against allowing yourself as women to be manipulated into being a sexual object, a sexual slave!

CLOTHED AND UNCLOTHED

When we think of our bodies we mostly think of them clothed. Clothes *do* play an important part in our perceptions of our bodies. With them we can *create* body images, by hiding bits of us we don't like and emphasizing those bits that we do like.

A group of women discussing body images came up with, amongst other things, the following comments on dress:

— "I feel that clothes reflect parts of me — moods."

— "I always like to wear long shirts. I hate my fat thighs."

— "I always hated frills. I used to wear lots of skirts, I didn't want to look tomboyish."

— "I never tried to dress up. I guess I thought that if I didn't try, no one would know I cared. Feminism gave me the freedom to dress with *myself* in mind — not with the image of the "ideal" woman in mind."

— "I always like to keep my stomach covered up, even in summer. It's too hairy."

— "I like to wear big baggy shirts, because my breasts are too big."

— "I still wear bras. I don't think about it ... just get up and put one on every morning."

— "I don't. But I always feel conscious that I'm bouncing all over the place."

— "I don't think about my body, apart from when it's in pain — and when I'm dressing."

From this discussion it became evident that women used clothes to express certain ways of thinking, moods, and to cover up bits of themselves that they didn't like, thighs, stomachs, breasts. The women's comments about themselves were always in the negative.

An interesting exercise is to make some time for yourself to be quiet and alone, take off all your clothes and jewellery and stand in front of a mirror. Working from your head down, or toes up, consider each body part and your feelings towards it. Which parts do you like and why? Which parts don't you like and why? What can you do about it? This is a difficult exercise but once you get over the hurdle of "having to stand naked in front of a mirror" it is challenging and fun and reveals a lot about your *own* feelings towards your body.

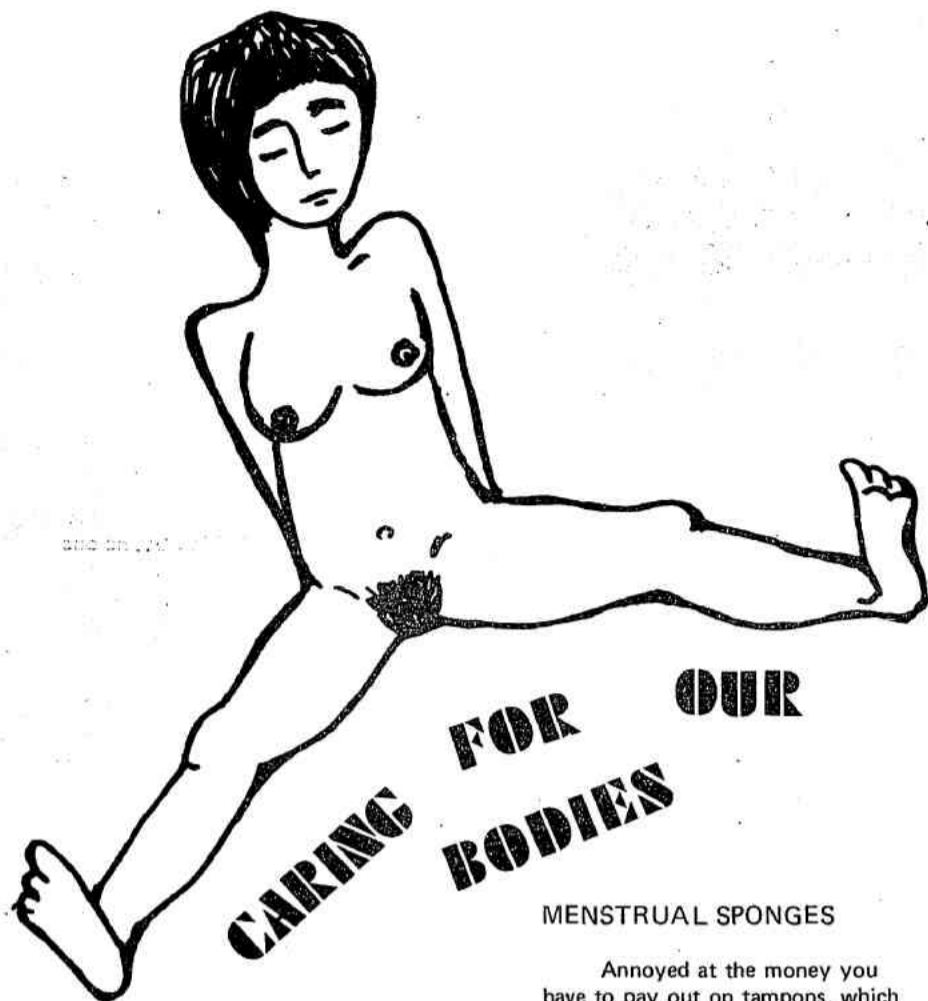
DO YOU ????

Everywhere women see this prototype draped over things, with accented sexuality, as part of the selling process. There is nothing like this sort of pressure upon men to see as vital their need to live up to the image of male beauty.

"For most of my life I hated my body because it wasn't like the picture of a beautiful woman. I suffered untold anxieties about how I looked, and what I should wear — it even stopped me from relating properly to other people as I was always wondering whether they were noticing that I wasn't beautiful. After deep sharing experiences with other women, I came to accept my body. Now I feel a new person integrated and able to live my life. I notice that a lot of other women have this sort of problem too."

"I have a good mind and I think I have something to contribute to discussion and decision-making but on repeated occasions I find men responding to my thoughts, as though I hadn't spoken, with remarks about how I look. It makes me feel like a thing, not a person."





SEXIST LANGUAGE

Copious articles have been written on the role of sexist language in reflecting and perpetuating women's oppression (see Woroni — Women's edition 1979). Our language reflects our concepts and our young are socialized to a large degree by words.

Feminists (especially this one) expend much time and energy correcting people's sexist talk and writing, and arguing/discussing the issue. This task is not pleasant and we are just as (usually more) bored with it as the indifferent listener, but we feel unable to relent on the issue. Most of the time now I really don't have the energy to rehash the topic simply for the sake of politicizing the people present, yet I continuously buy into a confrontation on it. Mostly I find I do it now because I get so outraged at the use of oppressive, trivialising or woman-excluding language that I simply can't concentrate on the lecture, book, discussion or whatever. I am glad though that when the body and emotions are feeling frayed from the constant battle, the will remains fixed into action by anger, because at each confrontation I am reminded of just how far we have to go. In each conflict situation there are people who cannot and *will* not attempt to understand what we are on about at the base level; power structures and mechanisms, who control and uses them at who's expense.

I've fought the battle over terminology more times than I care to remember. It's sad, but the best I can offer up these days is a much scaled-down, rather rote rendition of the reasons I am hurt and offended by sexist language. I also tend to react on a finely tuned trigger-mechanism whenever some unsuspecting (or sometimes calculating) speaker is insensitive enough to use offensive terminology. So it is with a sigh of relief that I am given food for thought on the issue in the unlikely

form of the Bushweek "Iron Man Race". I spent Bushweek last year correcting people constantly my insistent "Iron PERSON" resounded through the Union Building for more than a week. Perhaps it's a sign of that insidious disease — compromise — that creeps up with age (although I prefer to think my grasp of the issue is simply maturing) that I am happy for the spectacle to remain, the "Iron MAN" race. I happily relinquish my equality with men in that sphere. The Ironman race is a perfect example of all that is rotten and stinking in patriarchal culture. It's a "race" to show which of the participants can best display his lack of harmony with his environment, his degree of self-destructiveness and his competition to be the very best at being "a man" no matter what degrading and humiliating acts he has to perform to do so. Let it remain the Ironman Race to remind us what the logical extension of patriarchal culture is, just in case we forget why we're working at revolution.

Feminists and feminist sympathizers must be careful of the trap of automatic response to sexist language. A friend pointed out a good understanding of the issue in Philip Slater's *Earthwalk*, "terminological awkwardness centres around the terms 'man' and 'mankind', when used to denote humanity. While sensitive to the issues of sexism involved in such usage, I feel it would be equally unjust to talk about 'womankind' or 'humanity' when referring to the follies of patriarchal history. I have attempted — I hope successfully — to use the term 'human' when referring to events in a humane potential condition, while reserving the term 'man' for events in the male-dominated past. To refer to technology as an "extension of woman" would seem to me to miss the very important point that women have not generally displayed the same need to monumentalize themselves all over the environment."

CARE FOR OUR BODIES

MENSTRUAL SPONGES

Annoyed at the money you have to pay out on tampons, which seem to get more expensive each month? Well, never fear, there *is* an alternative — menstrual sponges!

Menstrual sponges are economical, easy to make, need a minimum of care and will last for years. To make one, simply buy a small makeup sponge from your friendly neighbourhood chemist or use a sea sponge which is just as good. Sew a length of cotton, dental floss or whatever is handiest onto the sponge to form a string and, presto, ready to go. Insert the sponge when you next begin to bleed and when it is full simply take it out, wash it out under a tap and reinsert. Many women are repulsed at the idea of actually touching menstrual blood or washing out sponges in such places as public toilets but remember that the blood is no different and certainly no more dirty or dangerous than blood from a cut finger.

Women in many societies, and ours is no exception are taught that menstruation is something to be ashamed of and kept secret. By refusing to conceal the fact that it is a normal biological function we can help break down the taboos which surround it. However, if you are shy about washing the sponge in public simply carry a second one and wash out the original at home (N.B. *Never* wash the sponge out by flushing the toilet as this can lead to nasty things such as cystitis.)

Menstrual sponges have the advantages of being

- economical, no further need to buy tampons.
- ecologically sound, think of all the cotton wool you won't be flushing down the drains!
- small and light, so are particularly good when travelling.
- more absorbent than tampons they really hold a lot!

(If you don't bleed very much you can always cut the sponge smaller)

At the end of your period wash out the sponge, using warm water and mild soap. Rinse it out and put it on the shelf until next time.

One note however, it's a good idea to rinse the sponge when you urinate, as sometimes the urine soaks into the sponge, and it can be a bit uncomfortable if you cough — you feel like you've wet yourself.

Anne Kent Rush points out in *Getting Clear* (1973:3) that as students, people generally pay little attention to the physical part of themselves. She talks about the fact that our bodies as well as our minds live the lives of university students and yet we pay almost no attention to them.

"Without shifting your position, notice how you are standing or sitting now; are you leaning more of your body weight to one side or the other? . . . If you are holding this [paper], tune in to which muscles you are using to do so. Your fingers, your palms, your arms, shoulders, neck, jaw, face, chest, back? You may be using (tensing) all of these unconsciously even your legs and feet! Hold the [paper]; feels its weight [or lack of it], experiment with supporting it with different muscles, gradually eliminating (releasing) unnecessary ones until you are holding the [paper] with just the few vital muscles." (Kent Rush 1973:3)

"Now try an "aliveness" check. Starting at your head and moving down to your toes, tune in, body part by body part, to whether you can feel any sensations *inside*. Can you feel behind your eyes, inside your throat, inside your chest and abdomen, can you feel your spine or hip joints, inside your legs and feet? You will probably get a lot of feeling from certain places, such as your hands and stomach, but you may have difficulty picking up any internal messages from (being "aware" of) some other places — such as your feet, inside your calves, or your hips." (Kent Rush 1973:4).

Reference: Kent Rush. A. 1973. New York, Berkley: Random House and The Bookworks.

NAG Bitch
 Sheila WHORE
 Witch Bird
 cunt Slut
 chick boob
 pussy TEASE
 HAG

LESBIAN MOTHERS

We're all aware that lesbians face discrimination as an oppressed group and we know that there are many lesbians who have children in their care. We all know that single parents have an uphill battle when it comes to compensating for the extra income of the two-parent family. We all know that 'motherhood' is oppressive, not just in terms of feminist theory, but in the real life, everyday experience of individual responsibility for dependent kids. What happens when you put all three factors together? Lesbian mothers are frequently invisible, and the reasons for this reflect the binds they live with.

Women who openly declare their homosexuality when they have children in their care directly challenge the mainstream ideas about parenting and 'normal' sexuality. As lesbians they pose a threat to patriarchy, when they are mothers as well, this threat is perceived very sharply. Often they cut across the bull-dyke image that society likes to keep and the world has to either shift its perception or deny their existence altogether.

It doesn't come as a surprise that few homosexual parents win the right to keep their children. This reflects the lack of societal acceptance of homosexuality as a valid lifestyle. The legal and welfare professions have shown prejudice towards the single parent who chooses to step outside the norm of heterosexual behaviour. The lesbian mother finds all the cards stacked against her in the baby health centre, church, school and court room. As well she is often denied the support network of her parents and family. If she is lacking the usual (inadequate) support, she must look for solidarity elsewhere, not just as a lesbian, but as a mother too.

The early feminist theories of the 60's and 70's demanded a rejection of the limitation of the nurture-role of woman as mother, a role women had become too familiar with and one which is central to our oppression. In time, women turned away from spending their political energy talking together about their feelings as mothers and wives and turned toward making positive changes in their lives. Political action never ceased around relevant issues such as child-care but in practice there is often little meeting-space for women to get together to talk about the problems of parenting unless they go back to conservative 'mothers' groups, double jeopardy for lesbians.

As well, there are lesbians who do not see themselves as feminists, do not take an active part in the women's or gay liberation movements and live in the mainstream of society with the one exception of their sexuality. Small social groups are the retreat of these women. Others choose to be invisible 'for the sake of the children' or because the problems of 'coming out' are too great.

Where these problems hit hardest is when the custody of the children is at stake. The thinly disguised prejudice of the legal profession and the unpreparedness of lesbian women for the muck that's dragged up in court gives lesbians less than a fighting chance of keeping their children in a custody battle.

Before the introduction of the Family Law Act there was only one reported case where a lesbian succeeded in keeping custody, and in that case severe restrictions were placed on the woman. The Full Court has said on a

number of occasions that homosexuality is not grounds for losing custody, however Maureen, a Melbourne lawyer says that it's clear in many cases that sexuality was the reason and not the other more important factors.

A frequent justification for taking kids away from their lesbian mothers is the argument about community attitudes to the welfare of the offspring of homosexuals — an argument which rests solidly on the prejudice that people are heterosexual or they're sick.

"It's interesting this view is prevalent because the number of single parents has increased enormously — thirty-five percent of all families are now headed by a lone parent — so the situation of the nuclear family remaining the norm has changed. It's just not true anymore."

Regardless of what the lawyer's 'figures' may suggest, the situation is that lesbian mothers must counteract a series of arguments in the court room which are grounded in the belief of the normalcy of the heterosexual nuclear family.

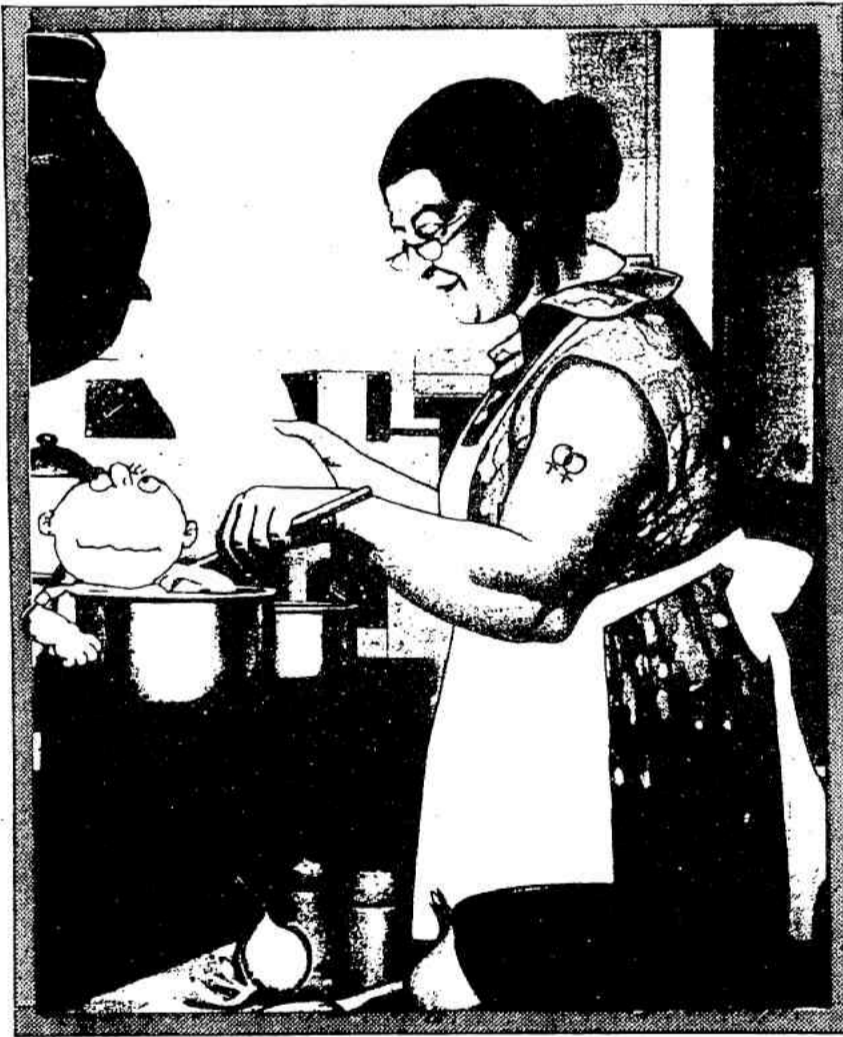
hard to substantiate because there are enough statistics proving homosexuals come from heterosexual backgrounds.

The wishes of the child are important too. If it's quite plain the child would prefer to be living with one party rather than another and that child is over 14 years old, the judge rarely overrules the choice.

Judges also consider the strong legal concept of maintaining the "status quo". If it's obvious the child is happy living with one parent there have to be very good reasons for changing that environment.

Maureen said successful custody cases for lesbian mothers usually revealed the father was clearly an inappropriate guardian because of violent traits, drinking problems, no money or he possibly did not bother to defend his case.

She firmly believed a woman competing with a well-off middle class, fine and upstanding male citizen (with no convictions), would stand a good chance of losing, regardless of how good or careful a mother she was.



Judges in the Family Law Court consider certain factors in making their judgements.

He or she will almost certainly be on the look out for any sign that the home environment of a homosexual parent's child is adversely affecting that child as compared with the situation offered by the other parent. Community attitudes and pressures brought to bear on the child because it lives with a person who chooses to be different, are another consideration. Will the parent/child relationship be strong enough to withstand these forces?

In the past judges have shown concern at the possibility the child would also become homosexual, unless of course it had sufficient role models of the opposite sex available.

This argument has always been

"Jane" was confident she'd win the right to keep her family, minus her husband, when she initiated a custody battle more than two years ago.

She had been married and living with the father of her kids, for more than ten years, when she decided to leave. Her decision was made because she had "come out" as a lesbian about two years before. Her husband was well aware of this, but wished to keep the family home together for as long as possible. So did she. But the double standard got too much for her and she finally walked out, taking the children.

Jane had moved away from the family home but she made sure the two children stayed at their old school, which was seven miles from their NEW home.

She said she made sure the kids got plenty of contact with other kids, and she never told them she was a lesbian... her lifestyle seemed to hardly change at all on the surface. She hadn't been out to work for years until just before she left her husband, when she slowly took over the responsibility for his part-time business,

It took two years for the case to get a final hearing in the Family Law Court, and Jane was happy it took that long because she knew if she could show the judge she'd adequately cared for the children for a significant time, she would have a good chance of keeping them. Not so!

She admitted she was naive about what would happen in the court room. Her husband was by then well-off, and he had bolstered his side of the case with psychological reports about his relationship with the children. These he got done on the weekends he was allowed access after the short preliminary hearing.

Jane didn't have access to that kind of ammunition; nor did she think she'd need it. She believed she was a good mother to her children. She had done all the right things in many ways. By being housebound for ten years, keeping the family together as long as she could, making sure the children were kept at their old school.

In court she was told she had no understanding of her children and that she was a hypocrite for sending them to a Catholic school. She was living a lifestyle contradicting the church.

Jane said she had plenty of support from her parents and her close friends who gave character references for her. But that wasn't enough because the court granted the children's father custody.

She said, "It really doesn't matter what you've done for your kids, or how long you've had them in your hands, you don't have a chance."

"They didn't care that the father had affairs with women, or tried to beat me up, and blackened my name to my children, because I was lesbian."

Jane now lives with a lover who ironically managed to procure custody of children from her marriage. However Jane said she feels happier without her own kids around her neck, because of the pressure it caused. Not because they were kids... but because she was always wondering who was watching her to see if she was a good mother.

During those two years she had the children before the case, she said she was looking over her shoulder constantly, and always on "best behaviour", scared of what evidence might be used against her.

She has no intention of giving up her lifestyle. But she fears for her future relationship with her three kids. She is scared her husband will use her relationship with her lover against her, and cut back her access to them OR stop it all together.

"Lisa" is a lesbian mother of two. Her children, a ten year old girl and an eight year old boy, have been in her sole care for seven years. Anne's problem with her ex-husband is different — getting the father to take any responsibility for the children.

Lisa obviously has the problems of any single mother, and more — any single mother who steps out a bit further and labels herself lesbian.

"Being open about your sexuality may mean you have to confront people, other children, teachers, par-

ents and be prepared to justify your existence. Even if you are willing to make it quite clear what you stand for, it's not always possible to do that. It's one thing for your kids to accept your choice of life-style and another thing to expect them to be indifferent to the criticism of their peers. A lesbian mother must feel completely secure in her relationship with her children if they are to accept her sexuality. Unless you can find the time and space to work at a sufficiently strong relationship with them, you risk the danger of your explanation of your lifestyle being undermined by the broader socialisation process. In that sense you almost have to be a 'super-mother', often when your time and energy is taken up with supporting them financially. The same is true of all parents who live outside the

nuclear family, but in the case of lesbian mothers there is an even greater need for sharing your experience with other lesbian parents."

When lesbian mothers become visible as a group they will become recognisable to each other and to the rest of society. In isolation it is impossible to counteract the enormous prejudices of society and it is difficult to share the positive aspects of lesbian parenting. Currently there is a group of Lesbian Mothers in Sydney and a group of women in Melbourne who have kids, and some of whom are lesbians. Contact the AUS Women's Department for more information.

Di and Anne

CHILD CUSTODY

Several trends are appearing in the

attitudes of the courts towards lesbian mothers.

1. An attempt by judges to appear less discriminatory by dismissing lesbianism per se, as the disqualifying ground for custody.
2. A steering away from the issue of whether the children brought up by homosexual parents will automatically become homosexual (for the simple reason that there is no evidence).
- 3.

However when it is boiled down three main reasons are being advanced to justify the granting of custody to the father.

1. The assumption that lesbian relationships can't be lasting because such a relationship is 'unnatural'.
2. A belief that trauma will be incurred by the child/ren upon realization

of their mother's sexual preference.

3. That lesbians are a minority which is socially ostracised therefore children will suffer. This argument could be equally applied to blacks or the handicapped.

Finally, there is a distinct trend in making custody awards conditional on certain undertakings on the part of the lesbian mother. This would appear to go totally against the grain of no fault divorce (a provision of the Family Law Act). It also counters the idea of maintaining emotional ties between parent and child. The implication of all this, is to impute a "nastiness" and "abhorrence" to lesbian sexuality, which is discriminatory non-factual and oppressive.

Source: *National Gay Summer Offensive Kit*.

COMING OUT CORRECTLY

Maintaining a correct, up to date line on lesbian activity is very much like trying to fix a predicatable pattern for wave movements along the shore: there isn't one. The winds of fashion are changeable, and attitudes and actions regarded for a time as exciting or appropriate can just as likely be seen as boring, ineffective, or deranged. As feminists who reject mass culture, rebels living in enemy territory, we have no, or few, models for ourselves. It is natural to therefore seek reassurance amongst our friends, and such groups can be nurturing and valuable to those in the inner circle of warmth. Too often we are reluctant to branch out into alternatives that might not be immediately acceptable to our group. Only by finding our uniqueness, but at the same time broadening our outlook, can we be ahead of The Man; can we avoid co-optation of our values; can we achieve *really* revolutionary alternatives.

STARRY-EYED

For a long time after coming out I remained, if not exactly starry-eyed, definitely firmly entrenched in the belief that 'lesbian women are all perfect'. That fond hope was shattered by the reality, that lesbians are fallible and vulnerable to mistakes like everybody else. The tightly cloistered, almost incestuous, more-lesbian-than-thou attitude I soon recognized as prevalent (you could say rampant) in our communities, acts as a barrier as well as a defense. It is this attitude that is the basis of separatism.

This attitude reflects our very real need to protect ourselves from a world that we too often encounter as hostile, and stems from the very nature of our experience as 'The Other'. More than this, refusing our collusion and separating ourselves from the mind-set of the oppressor, is a necessary part of polarization and realignment. Free from the repressive influence of stigma and authoritarian dogma, it is good to reveal ourselves to one another, to create alternate ways of freeing ourselves from the dictatorship of mass culture. In fact, it is good to take this even further, to cultivate a sense of our separate selves, and the connections between our need for solitude and the equally powerful need for community. And we know who we are . . .

We are the ones who must choose, with every encounter, either

to insulate our involvement or to continue to challenge the patriarchal mind-set. Our choice to identify as lesbian is deeper than sexual preference. Coming out is a political statement. When we free our minds and energies for loving women, we are saying a strong clear NO to the very basis of our oppression; the lie that woman's pleasure is dependent on and subservient to man's.

PLEASURE DEBASED

I use the word pleasure deliberately, knowing too well how it has been debased. Pleasure is not merely an aimless pastime. How we take our pleasure is the bed-rock of our lives. Asserting our autonomy and integrity is how we choose sides. The methods we employ, the process by which we intend to achieve our revolutionary goals, will vary. Separatist solutions to our problems may save or replenish our energy for a while (especially

if we can muster the necessary amount of righteous indignation) but in the long run, separatism is a diversion and consequently a threat to the real and not the fancied liberation of women.

The danger of separatism is that to a certain extent it really works. Retreat from a situation and it doesn't take long for its significance to fade. Yes, it is necessary to immunize ourselves, not to fall into the trap of complicity. We must be clear and strong and continue to make the essential distinctions. With all due caution, it is important that we work in the world, to permeate it with radical consciousness. Withdrawing from a situation may be beneficial for one's own head. It doesn't do much to change the situation.

In an attempt to achieve the security and sense of belonging necessary for our own validation and growth, we must not lose the total perspective that could function as a basis of unity for political action. We must be careful of an ideological elitism, that can undermine us as surely as it alienates our vital solidarity. It blurs the validity of our convictions and confuses or obscures the real issues. This is delightful to The Man who is ready and organized to exploit our uncertainty.

This approaches the heart of our danger. When we separate ourselves from ourselves, we co-opt the movement by exposing ourselves to manipulation by The Man. By taking the least political part of gay life and glamorizing it, acknowledging, even elevating, what it has long hidden and abhorred. The Man claims the best of both worlds. Notice how quickly gay culture is being homogenized into the sterile conventions of stereotype. The current media trend of portraying 'the Gay Life' as 'radical chic' is an attempt to deflect the social and political implications of the recognition that homosexuality is not a sin or a disease, but a normal, even creative impulse.

THE GAY LIFE

There is no 'gay lifestyle' for we come in all types. Our struggle for self-expression and equal rights must not obscure our higher intent: to radicalize the world today and take part in the building of a time where love is self-explanatory and has nothing to do with oppression.

lesbians where are we all?



NOT
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